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SOMERVILLE ON ETHICS + PREJUDICE IN EUROPE + A PASTOR'S MEMOIR

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

JANUARY 2011

Best
Denominational
Magazine
2010 Associated
Church Press

CAN YOU IMAGINE!

ON HOW THE GOSPELS CAN MAKE
YOU WONDERFULLY INTERESTING,
AND SOMEWHAT WEIRD

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DATE: May 20–23, 2011

PLACE: Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill (GTA), Ontario

REGISTRATION FEES:

\$425 (deadline March 31, 2011)

Family Rate: \$50.00 off per person (18 years and over)

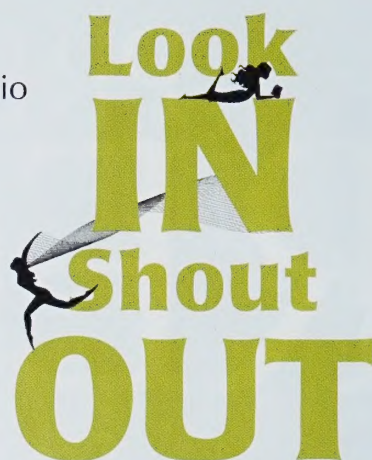
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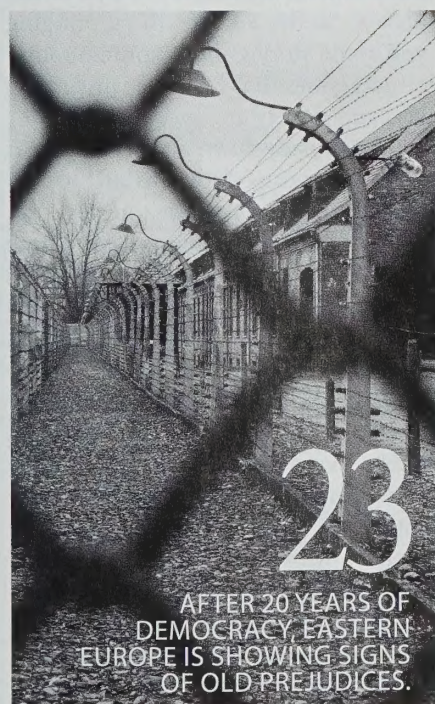
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CAN YOU IMAGINE!

ON HOW THE GOSPELS CAN MAKE YOU WONDERFULLY
INTERESTING, AND SOMEWHAT WEIRD.



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AFTER 20 YEARS OF
DEMOCRACY, EASTERN
EUROPE IS SHOWING SIGNS
OF OLD PREJUDICES.

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Anna Goodson



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All That Fits

THE *RECORD* COVERS ALL THAT IS INTERESTING TO THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE CHURCH.

BY DAVID HARRIS

One of the two questions I'm most often asked at social gatherings when I tell people what I do, is what kind of stories do we publish in the *Record*.

I tell them, Everything: from politics to social issues and cultural criticism—book and movie reviews—to disaster relief and community development overseas to, well, even the occasional sports-related story.

And, of course, the standard repertoire of theology, spirituality and the health of the church, from local congregations to national and international church structures.

And your letters. And your People and Places submissions. And artwork and photographs and, well, there's not much we don't publish. We even publish stories on where you can invest your money, if you think about it: the variety of opportunities in supporting church and church-related charities, for instance.

The second question I'm usually asked is what I think is the future of religion publishing in Canada. That's much more difficult. And I wish I knew the answer. What I do know is that there is certainly still an interest in questions about religion, and there is certainly a role for religion in the political life—some call it the public square—of our country.

This was never so evident as the weekend before I wrote this editorial.

The *Globe and Mail* launched a series about the face of religion in Canada. The paper flanked its coverage with commentary from panelists of different faiths from across the country.

Three things struck me from the initial stories. First, a religion sociologist in Waterloo said the three things that attract



We already have an exciting year lined up and we look forward to you accompanying us on the journey

people to church these days are “availability of parking, quality of preaching and children's programs, in that order.”

There's enough there to dissect and discuss that it would fill a whole year's worth of the magazine and then some. So we'll spread it out. But discuss it we will.

Secondly, one of the stories noted how immigrants are changing established denominations. The story observed that immigrants of most faiths are more conservative socially and theologically than Canadian-born practitioners, and noted the conservative influence of some of these groups in the Presbyterian Church.

Thirdly—and perhaps most concerning—is the continued increase in the declining relevance of religion to people under 60. Even among those over 60, a bare majority think of Christmas as primarily a religious holiday as opposed to a social one. (It was a dodgy question, but still.)

There are scores of stories here to be explored and the *Record* already has many lined up on these subjects. So I urge you not only to read the maga-

zine but to share the stories with your friends and to engage with the writers.

Write us! Letters to the editor or comments at the end of stories online are a way in which you can participate in the discussion of these and other issues facing the church and society.

And to be sure, there is a need for the voice of religion in public discourse.

The parallel rise of secularism and fundamentalism in North America has tended to diminish the voice of reasoned faith in matters where religion has much to offer.

This is particularly so in the field of ethics, especially in medicine.

I have read several stories over the past year about questionable medical practices that Christian ethicists might have something helpful to add to the debate. So the *Record* will be bringing you some stories about contemporary ethical issues that we hope will engage you and society at large.

We already have an exciting year lined up and we look forward to you accompanying us on the journey.

The new year is always a good time to introduce changes and the *Record* is very happy to be presenting the magazine in a higher quality paper than we've been able to use before.

We hope that you find it a bit easier to read. It's brighter but has a low gloss finish that minimizes glare. Like the newsprint we've been using for the past couple of years, it's also ecologically friendly, with more than 90 per cent of its content made from reclaimed fibre.

Please let us know what you think. And have a very Happy New Year! ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO. 1, JANUARY 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

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ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388

Registration No. 09634

Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.

Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government
of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF)
for our publishing activities.

Subscription rates. GST/HST not included.

Every Home Plan: \$19.50

Individual: \$28

U.S.A. and foreign: \$38 **Single copies:** \$3.95

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by
the *Presbyterian Record* or The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Address all correspondence and changes of address
(include label from magazine) to:

Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Phone: (416) 441-1111; 1-800-619-7301

Fax: (416) 441-2825

E-mail: circulation@presbyterianrecord.ca

Web site: www.presbyterianrecord.ca

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Canada

Magazines
Canada

We're Number Last

Re Devil Hands, Letters, November

What is so offensive about someone
raising a closed fist with only the index
finger raised? Is it because the first
shall be last?

BRIAN NEILSON,

ST. ANDREW'S HALL, VANCOUVER

Risk Being Pilloried

Re Risk It All, November

Rev. Wes Denyer has created the
impression that dwindling Christian
congregations should give up and
accept the inevitable; but surely that
has never been the way of Christians
when met by adversity.

At the possibility of being pilloried,
I suggest the 'dwindling' congregations
look to the corporate community
and find out how it would approach
a similar situation. In my opinion,
they would never give up without a
thorough examination of the problem
and charting a course of action. Success
or failure would be measured later.

GARTH E. STAPLES, P.E.I.

ON OUR WEBSITE

At the risk of being pilloried myself, may
I suggest we stop looking to the corporate
business world as our example and start
looking to Jesus Christ, the author and
finisher of our faith who, although he
existed in the form of God, did not regard
equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Letters



write to us

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but emptied himself, taking the form
of a bond-servant and, being made in
the likeness of men and being found in
appearance as a man, he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to the point of
death, even death on a cross. Maybe it
is time to be willing to lay everything—
including our very life, at his feet and cry,
“Lord have mercy on us!”

MELODY HEWKO, CRANBROOK, B.C.

ON OUR WEBSITE

They Followed Him

*Re Do I Tell Them About the Reindeer?,
The Messy Table, Nov. 29* ➤

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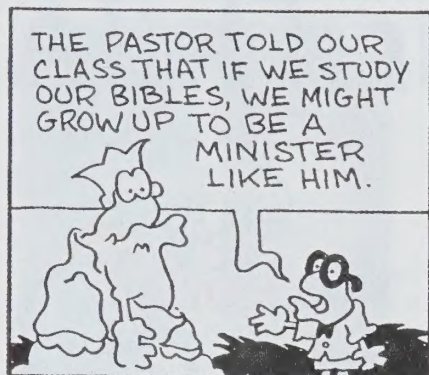
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Pontius' Puddle



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One year, many, many years ago, at a church now far, far away, the evening Christmas pageant ended with an elder dressed up in the minister's alb, complete with stole and a crosier. The announcer for the evening stated that St. Nicholas was going to walk over to the church hall and for the children to follow him. And follow him they did! This elder handed

out candy to all the pageant participants. Did any of the children mention that this was a weird looking Santa Claus? Nope, not at all. Children are far more open to change than adults will ever be. (Where do we lose that openness to change?) Our family used to celebrate St. Nicholas' Day by having an open house. This was a time for family and friends to gather to celebrate the coming birth of the infant Jesus.

LORNA BALL, BRANDON, MAN.
ON OUR WEBSITE

A Fund to Assist Ministers

I was 16 years old—I couldn't wait to get my driver's license. I couldn't wait to work and make my own money. I couldn't wait to go to college to be a social worker. I couldn't wait to move out of the house and be independent.

I was going to have a great life—get married, have children, buy a house. I was a typical teenager. I was in control.

But life happens and my life has certainly been an adventure and not what I had planned at all! There have been many detours along the way.

One such detour occurred in the '90s. Our family went through some terrible hardships (unplanned, of course, and unexpected).

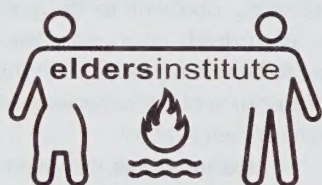
In every hardship there are also unexpected blessings. The fund for ministerial assistance was one such blessing.

Sickness had left our family in a crisis and things were getting worse. But with the same spirit of determination I had when I was 16, I was going to manage (somehow!).

However, as time went on, we found our family caught between the left hand and right hand of financial assistance for those who are not able to work due to disability. My husband had no long-term disability at his work; the sick benefits through unemployment insurance were only for a short term (10 weeks approximately).

The provincial disability family benefits would only kick in when the E.I. ran out and once you were under the provincial legislation, you were expected

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Memories!

*Re Hats Off to Grandma,
Patricia Schneider, Oct. 4*

Ah! Tea parties. My little girls presented their share of them too, and giggled when their dad curled his not so little finger when he picked up the tea cup and played the part.

JANET OPUS, GRANDE PRAIRIE, ALTA.
ON OUR WEBSITE

Sit Next To Each Other? Presbyterians?

*Re Building a Culture of Song,
In Song, Dec. 1*

What a great collection of ideas, Andrew!

I wonder, in congregations where the capacity of the sanctuary is quite a bit larger than the gathered community, whether finding some way to encourage (or compel!) people to sit next to one another would go some ways toward finding a common voice in song.

RON RIENSTRA, ON OUR WEBSITE

to apply for all other benefits you may be entitled to, which in this case was Canada Pension's disability plan.

Sounds complicated. It felt complicated. I remember what I felt like back then. Trying to juggle everything—hoping that we would find some stability. It seemed that we spent the entire year trying to unravel the bureaucracy of social assistance while my husband coped with a permanent disability at age 47 and what that would mean to him for the rest of his life.

And then came a blessing! (Unexpected and unplanned for.) The fund for ministerial assistance. I don't remember who it was, but some kind soul directed me to the fund.

I am very determined and independent by nature! We will manage! But there is a time when we all have to put aside our pride and ask for help. It took a lot of courage back then to ask for help and looking back, I am so glad I did.

Today, I share my story for three reasons. First, I would like to express my deep and heartfelt gratitude for this fund and all who administer it. I respect your confidentiality, your kindness and love shared through the gifts given to our family that year. I also thank God for all those who are part of the team of people who hear stories like ours year after year and yet continue to offer such a genuine expression of care.

Secondly, I would like to express my thanks to Norman M.

Paterson posthumously for having the foresight to see that his gift of generosity made in 1951 was needed and would continue to help many families like ours over the years.

At our 136th General Assembly the following recommendation was passed: "That the continuing need for new infusions of capital into the fund for ministerial assistance, in order to maintain the gifts to eligible ministers and their families, be drawn to the attention of sessions and to the members of congregations."

As one who was a recipient of this fund many years ago, any donation to this fund will make a difference to some family this year ... and in years to come. As the Moderator, Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, shared at General Assembly, let us board the ship of Generosity and give.

REV. VICKI HOMES, SUMMERSIDE, P.E.I.

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If you sent us anything, please resend to:
PRMail@presbyterian.ca
Thank you. —Editor

online extra

AS ALWAYS, LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED SO MORE VOICES CAN BE SHARED. THE COMPLETE TEXT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA.

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Christians Without Borders

A REMINDER OF THE GOOD WE CAN DO. BY ANDREW FAIZ

In the October 2007 issue

I wrote about my visit to Afghanistan and introduced readers to Engineer Nejabat Khan Safi. He is director for a chapter of Church World Service in Kabul, Afghanistan. Our own Presbyterian World Service and Development partners with CWS and has brought Canadian Foodgrains Bank in as another partner. So, Canadian food and relief funds go directly to Afghanistan, via PWS&D, to Safi and his 200 staff who then use it to provide food, education, training and livelihood to thousands of Afghans.

Safi was in Canada in November speaking on behalf of CFGB and PWS&D from Alberta to Ontario; and most importantly for me, I was able to spend a day with him to renew our friendship. Here I present my own rather angry editorializing on his soft-spoken wisdom.

Safi is an engineer by professional training. (In his tradition, a professional degree is used as a title, the way we still do with doctor, minister or professor, but have forgotten to do with teacher, lawyer or engineer.) He told me as an engineer he has to find the weakest point in a structure and work on supporting that.

Of course, the vulnerable points in Afghanistan are innumerable. Or as Safi said, with a half smile, "These are the gifts of 30 years of war." They include lack of education: Children take turns going to school in four shifts, each shift lasting a couple of hours. When speaking at Flemingdon Gateway Mission, the afterschool program of the Presbytery of East Toronto, he told the mostly Afghan and some Iranian teens that their counterparts in Afghanistan do not have the opportunity to learn. There are no leadership-in-training programs in Afghanistan.



EDUCATION IS
THE GREATEST
TOOL AGAINST THE
ERASURES OF WAR

There is a severe shortage of teachers and rooms and supplies. Each shift of students may number from 60 to 80; teachers are overwhelmed. The education offered is basic—well below Canadian standards. A Teachers Without Borders program would certainly help.

Education is the greatest tool against the erasures of war. It provides an imagination that someplace out there, beyond our own experience, is a different world filled with different ideas and different concepts. I am reminded of those classic education stories like *The Corn Is Green*, in which a dedicated teacher pulls a brilliant student out of his insular traditions. That story is playing out in Afghanistan right now. We can ensure its success.

Security is another issue, of course, particularly in Kandahar, but sporadically across the country. Much of Afghanistan is safe to travel and live in. But security forces are not well trained or well paid. Safi suggested that while international troops are needed to fight the arrogant and stubborn Taliban, it would perhaps be more helpful to use a tenth of the international

budgets to train and pay local troops. Again, educators needed.

Food production is a huge issue in a mostly mountainous country, parts of which have been suffering drought for years. A unique program to catch water run-offs has had great success. Safi salivated with hopefulness when he visited large-scale farms on our prairies. Farmers Without Borders and Engineers Without Borders could really make a huge difference in Safi's beloved, war-ravaged homeland.

A program to give widows and other vulnerable people two sheep has had enormous success. Milk is used and the excess sold. The wool is used to make carpets or is sold. The sheep are bred. Some women now have nine sheep or more. We, the members of the Presbyterian Church, gave them those sheep and in doing so provided them with a life. Now we need to educate their children.

While the rest of Canada is obsessed with the small corner of Afghanistan called Kandahar, the few of us involved in that nation through our churches can proudly state we are helping to make a huge difference in the lives of many people. And we can do more.

The dialogue in Canada around Afghanistan has been petty-minded and limited, lacking largely in great transformational stories in the remaining 95-plus per cent of the nation that is not Kandahar. Lacking good news stories, we have been obsessed only with the evils of war.

There are bad people out there and they need to be stopped. But there are overwhelmingly good people who need to be helped. We have to and can help. ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.

AFGHANISTAN



Dreaming of Peace

WORKING TOWARDS CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN. BY CONNIE PURVIS

"OUR POETS WRITE ABOUT PEACE and security," said Nejabat Kahn Safi. More than two decades ago, during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, "people urged people to become 'freedom fighters' ... But now, most people are tired of war."

Safi heads the Kabul office of Church World Service—Pakistan/Afghanistan, an ecumenical coalition supported by Presbyterian World Service and Development and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. In November he toured Canada under the auspices of CFGB, speaking

about his work and his country.

"People were in great hope this time," he said of the most recent international conflict, which began in 2001 with a U.S. and U.K.-led coalition. "They thought there would be peace, good jobs, or at least something to eat."

According to Safi, the majority of the population still do not have enough food, and have less than \$1 a day to support families that average seven people. But in a presentation to national office staff on Nov. 29, he said he has seen progress in areas where

'People were in great hope this time. They thought there would be peace, good jobs, or at least something to eat'

CWS and its partners are working.

PWS&D-supported projects in Afghanistan have included food security initiatives, such as those in ➤



Nejabat Kahn Safi speaks to national office staff.

Zabul province, that have provided farmers with better seed and 211 families with sheep. Restoring water storage ponds and "kariz" wells, which are created by digging underground tunnels up to 30 kilometres long, help to access water and keep it from evaporating—an indispensable gift in the

country's south, which has suffered a 12-year drought.

Education for girls, Safi said "has a smaller budget value [than some of our other programs], but it has big value for me. If we have an educated country we may have peace in Afghanistan." An educated population, he said, is more resistant to political manipulation.

Afghanistan has a history fraught with conflict, and Safi was not immune to its effects. As the eldest child in a family of eight, he fled to Pakistan with his parents in 1981, walking for 12 days through mountain roads to escape the fighting between Soviet and Afghan government forces and mujahidin guerrillas. The conflict dragged on for decades; Soviet troops withdrew from the country in 1989—two years before the Soviet Union

collapsed—and the country's communist government toppled in 1992. The intervening years saw power struggles among political factions and the rise of the Taliban, an Islamist group that was ousted from power in 2001 but continues to operate as an insurgency movement. Car bombs on the streets of Kabul make Safi's 15 kilometre journey from home to the office a treacherous one.

But Safi can remember receiving good health care and support from CWS as a refugee in Pakistan. And he said it is hearing people say thank you, and seeing the results of programs that make him want to continue working, and continue believing that peace can be achieved in Afghanistan. ■

Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.

Drumming for Indigenous Justice

ALBERTA CONGREGATION CELEBRATES GOVERNMENT'S ENDORSEMENT. **BY CONNIE PURVIS**

ON DEC. 5, drums echoed in the hall of St. Andrew's, Lethbridge, Alta., in celebration of the government's endorsement of a UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Presbyterian-supported Kairos, which spearheaded a nation-wide drumming initiative, welcomed the government's Nov. 12 endorsement. In a press release, the ecumenical coalition called the move "another important step toward a new relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples," but recognized that "now ... the real work of implementation begins." The sentiments were echoed by the Presbyterian Church's Stephen

Allen, head of Justice Ministries.

Kairos' national "day of action"—which originally intended to use drum circles as part of a call for the government to endorse the UN Declaration—was reworked to become a celebration of progress, and an encouragement to implement policies consistent with the document.

The event at St. Andrew's was organized by representatives from six denominations and brought together an aboriginal drumming team, members of the community, and a variety of drums



A community drum circle at St. Andrew's, Lethbridge, Alta.

from around the world.

"We're quite delighted," said Douglas Mitchell, the Presbyte-

rian representative to Kairos' Lethbridge committee. "We had about 40 people—not all church people, which is heartening—and some people had enthusiasm to help us out."

The UN adopted the Declaration in Sept. 2007 with a vote of 144-4; Canada joined the U.S., New Zealand and Australia in opposing it, although both New Zealand and Australia have since reconsidered their positions.

In a statement issued the day of its endorsement, the government said its concerns about the document "are well known and remain. However, we have since listened to aboriginal leaders who have urged Canada to endorse the Declaration and we have also learned from the experience of other countries. We are now confident that Canada can interpret the principles expressed in the Declaration in a manner that is consistent with our Constitution and legal framework." ■

Mod Nominees Announced

FOUR MINISTERS have been nominated for Moderator of the 2011 General Assembly:

Rev. Dr. Rick Horst of St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont.; Rev. Thomas Kay of McNab Street, Hamilton, Ont.; Rev. Iona MacLean of First, Pictou, Nova Scotia; and Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams, executive director, Action Réfugiés, Montreal.

Ballots were sent to presbyteries in December for voting. The committee to advise the moderator will count the ballots on April 1.

The 2011 General Assembly meets on June 5 in London, Ont., where the new moderator will be officially installed.

Look for interviews with each nominee in the February issue of the *Record*. ■

Creating new futures of hope in Afghanistan



Years of war in Afghanistan have disrupted the lives of so many people, leaving them struggling to overcome enormous poverty and suffering. In a country where the female literacy rate is under 18%, girls face particularly difficult challenges when it comes to receiving an education, securing employment and rising out of poverty to live more dignified lives.

In response, PWS&D is taking up the challenge of helping young girls get into the classroom, while strengthening the education system for sustainable, long-term impact. PWS&D also works at improving food security in Afghanistan, where agricultural production was devastated by war and drought. Please join our efforts through your prayers and donations.

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Community News

LMA Clarifies Changes

THE LIFE AND MISSION Agency released a memo on Dec. 7 that hopes to “identify pertinent questions so that the constituency will be aware of the direction of this reorganization.” It is available at presbyterian.ca/pconnect/daily/5560.

The agency also posted applications for the position of associate secretary of Canada Ministries/the Vine. A job description is available at presbyterian.ca.

Canada Ministries and the Vine merge Jan. 1 and will be jointly headed by the current associate secretaries until a single department head begins work in September. ■

—C.Purvis

Women's Gathering Update

PLANNING of the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering, hosted by the Women's Missionary Society and the Atlantic Mission Society, is well underway, with more than 420 people already registered for the four-day event. Meeting in Richmond Hill, Ont., women from across Canada—as well as many international guests—will gather May 20-23 to learn and be challenged by 25 workshops and high-profile speakers such as Margaret Somerville, founding director of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University, Montreal.

Sarah Kim, executive director of the WMS, told the *Record* that “the response from the international partner churches has been tremendous.”

She said the local arrangements committee is planning exciting activities for a free Saturday night in Toronto, with events to be confirmed this month.

The registration deadline is March 31. Winners of an early bird draw were recently announced: Bonnie Wynn from



Moderator Visits Museum Rev. Angus Sutherland, history committee convenor, shows Moderator, Rev. Herb Gale the vast and precious collection of communion tokens at the National Presbyterian Museum in Toronto. Gale was there as part of a “Meet and Greet with the Moderator,” helping to spotlight the important work of the museum, and was available for questions and comments from those in attendance.

New Brunswick won the grand prize of free registration and free hotel; and Heather Ingram-Smith from Kitchener, Ont., and Susan Down from Trenton, Ont., both won free registration.

Visit womensgathering.ca for more information. ■ —AM

Major Promotion for Padre Sandy Scott

REV. SANDY SCOTT of St. Paul's, Prince Albert, Sask., was promoted major on Oct. 17, and with his new epaulettes came new responsibilities.

“As deputy area chaplain I am the

lead reserve army chaplain in Western Area, which stretches from Thunder Bay to Vancouver Island," Scott explained in an email. "My main area of responsibility is to assist the area chaplain, Lt.-Col. Laurelle Callaghan, in supervising and mentoring chaplains and recruiting new chaplains ... It is a busy task but I am enjoying the new challenge."

Previously, Scott was unit chaplain for the North Saskatchewan Regiment based in Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

Although he is a full-time minister at St. Paul's and a part-time chaplain, his congregation was willing to part with him for a six-month tour in Afghanistan from Oct. 2009 until April 2010.

"Serving with Task Force Afghanistan 3-09, and the chaplain team I was with was an honour and privilege," he wrote with characteristic modesty. "I was impressed by the hard work, dedication and determination of the many young Canadians I served with."

■ —C.Purvis

Cairn Fundraiser

LAST NOVEMBER, Cairn, Central Ontario's camping organization, held a gala fundraiser to celebrate Glen Mhor Camp's 80th anniversary. Amongst many other festivities, five people—including the Vine's associate secretary Tori Smit—who had been to Cairn camps for at least 10 years were honoured with a paddle which will be hung at one of the campsites. Smit

spent a large part of her life at Glen Mhor and Iona, and also sat on the board and has served at the camps as a chaplain.

The event was sold out with 120 people attending, and more than 30 camp staff and members of the Cairn alumni committee were on hand to help make the event possible. More than \$5,000 was raised, which will go towards the continued upkeep of the Glen Mhor site.

■ —AM

Crieff Dedicates New Building

RENOVATIONS at Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre are well underway, as a new building was dedicated in November. The Crieff Inn—"a place apart" that can be used for short- and longer-term stays as well as by day visitors—will help fulfil the need for expanded facilities.

About 90 people attended the event, and Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, Moderator of assembly, led the service of dedication.

The new facility should be ready in February, and bookings are currently being accepted. The existing conference hall is next on the renovation list, and will proceed as funds allow.

The building is part of a \$2.5-million dollar construction project that will

enable Crieff to accommodate larger and more diverse groups. ■ —AM ➤

Plater Wins Writing Award

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S Karen Plater, associate secretary for Stewardship and Education for Mission, was presented with a Random House Creative Writing Award for her short story, *She Steps Out*. A unanimous choice of the judges, the story was published by Random House in a booklet along with two other winners.

"I often entertained people with stories of the sheep, so that's where I began," said Plater, who divides her time between a condo in downtown Toronto and a sheep farm in the Beaver Valley. "I have discovered that I really enjoy sharing the story with others."

Plater has been taking creative writing courses at the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies since 2009, saying she has "always wanted to be a writer."

She Steps Out can be read at <http://learn.utoronto.ca/artsci/creative/award.htm>. ■ —AM

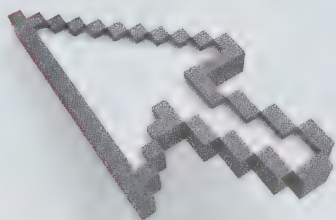


Rev. Sandy Scott with a soldier in Afghanistan.

TOP PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDY SCOTT; BOTTOM PHOTO BY ANDREW FAIZ



Cairn campers and staff were honoured at a fundraiser last November. Among them was national office staffer, Tori Smit (third from right).

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STARTING THIS MONTH

Ultimate Destination

Patricia Schneider shares her personal and profound five-year journey from when her husband, Harry was first diagnosed with cancer.

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Assembly Council Debates Budget and Building

The November meeting of the Assembly Council focused on money issues. Since the 2010 budget looked healthy (revenues were \$40,000 behind budget as of November, but expenses were also more than \$400,000 under-spent), the 2011 week off without pay for national office staff will be reconsidered if warranted by year-end finances. The finance committee was granted the power to make a final decision at its 2011 meeting. The week without pay was part of budget cutbacks announced about a year ago, and was intended to last for two years.

A recommendation from the Life and Mission Agency that the church's missionary residence, which is located

in Toronto, be sold as repair and upkeep costs have been increasing, was put on hold. The low-rise apartment building houses a few paying tenants, and provides apartments for missionaries on furlough, seminary students from abroad, and international guests. As part of the proposed plan, a few condominium apartments would be bought to be used by missionaries.

Herb Gale, associate secretary of Planned Giving and Moderator of the 2010 assembly, argued that all possibilities related to keeping the residence should be explored. He recommended a revised motion: "That consideration of the sale of the missionary residence take place only after a report from a task force whose mandate is not solely financial but

Kairos Remains Hopeful

KAIROIS CANADA held a media briefing in November to explain the effects of a CIDA funding cut on its international partners. The cut has meant a 16 per cent drop in financial support to partners around the world.

"This is not just a financial issue, but an issue of hope for us," said Brother Omar Fernandez Obregon, founder and director of the Inter-Franciscan Commission of Justice and Peace from Colombia. Speaking via Skype from Brazil, Obregon said losing Kairos funding "is very dramatic. We're really very worried that we can't do the same work now."

Though Kairos had received CIDA funding for the last 35 years, \$7 million was unexpectedly cut in Nov. 2009, leading to much speculation.

Minister of International Cooperation, Bev Oda maintains that the cut was due to a change in CIDA's funding priorities, which Kairos reportedly no longer fit. But several stories from Canadian media last October revealed that top-ranking CIDA officials, as well as embassy officials around the globe all okayed Kairos's funding, even recommending a four per cent increase "to recognize Kairos' strategic alignment with CIDA's objectives," according to a story in the *Globe and Mail*.

Kairos submitted a new, scaled back proposal last March, requesting funding that would take them to 2014. The proposal highlights how their projects fit CIDA's priorities, including how they will address the safety and security of children and youth, and how KAIROS will contribute to an enabling environment for sustainable agriculture. They have yet to receive a response and have not been told when to expect an answer.

"This is the Advent time; between the now and the not yet. We're hopeful we will get CIDA funding, but we also have to look for other sources," said Jennifer Henry, manager of Kairos's rights and dignity team. "If we don't get funding, we will be facing very significant changes."

"The work Kairos does can lead to profound, long-term change," said executive director Mary Corkery. "Many Canadians are anxious to know that our government still supports development work." ■ —AM

explores how the mission residence could be used to complement the mission work of the Presbyterian Church in Canada." The amended motion passed by one vote.

It was noted that missionaries were against selling the building, though International Ministries staff reluctantly recommended it be sold.

A task force with members from both the LMA committee and the Assembly Council will report back in March.

Council spent an evening reading and analyzing two documents: the *Canadian Presbyterian Statement on Our Relationship with Jewish People*, and *A Moment of Truth*, a Palestinian Christian statement. Members' responses ranged from completely disagreeing with what the documents said to feeling fairly confident in them, while recognizing the biased nature of certain statements. The executive committee will discuss the responses before making further recommendations to the church.

The long-range planning committee, which was responsible for the Emmaus Project last spring, will end its work over the next 18 months. In the meantime, it will work with presbyteries on mission and ministry planning strategies. ■ —AM

Reports from the Life and Mission Agency

"This is a major transition year," Lori Ransom said during her presentation to the Life and Mission Agency Committee in November. She pegged it as the 173rd time she had spoken about healing and reconciliation during her time as the church's program animator. In September, Ransom will be returning to the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs after five years with the church.

"This has been a really life-giving ministry for me personally and the church has been very generous to me," she said. "If we're really going to reconcile, it has to be rooted at the community level. Confessions are

important, but for change to really take place it really has to involve change in the heart of communities."

About \$180,000 has been set aside for activities related to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission until 2014, and 33 local volunteer leaders have been trained since the program began. Healing and reconciliation will be more closely integrated with the work of Justice Ministries when Ransom's contract expires.

Ken Kim, director of Presbyterian World Service and Development, reported that the church's relief and development arm received a glowing review from the Canadian International Development Agency.

The extensive organizational assessment found PWS&D was achieving its objectives, managing its resources and budgets well, and was responding effectively to its partners without creating dependency.

PWS&D has been receiving CIDA funding since 1979, and over the last 25 years has received over \$11 million. The current four-year CIDA-supported program will expire in 2011. A new proposal, which requests a 10 per cent budget increase, was submitted to

Confessions are important, but for change to really take place it really has to involve change in the heart of communities

CIDA in September 2010.

The launch of a new employee assistance program for ministers and national church staff was a major focus for Ministry and Church Vocations in 2010, reported Susan Shaffer, associate secretary.

The service, which is provided by Shepell.fgi, provides counselling and assistance that can be accessed 24 hours a day through a call centre. Users remain anonymous and the service is free for employees and their immediate families.

The fund for sustaining pastoral excellence, which is supported through donations and bequests, should support the program for a two-year trial period. ■ —C.Purvis

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— on CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
- **Nancy Calvert-Koyzis**, Minister in Association, Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton Ontario — on WHAT'S NEW IN NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES
- **Samuel Calian**, President Emeritus of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary — on LEADERSHIP
- **David Jacobsen**, Professor of Homiletics, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary — on PREACHING AND WORSHIP

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Integrity and Humility

LESSONS LEARNED FROM LAUSANNE III. BY DON MACLEOD

DESCRIBED AS “the most globally representative assembly of evangelicals in history,” the third Lausanne Congress brought over 4,000 Christians from 198 countries to Cape Town, South Africa, for a week in October. Unlike the two previous Lausanne congresses (1974 and 1989) this meeting had a strong African, Asian and Latin American presence.

The chairperson, the Anglican Archbishop of Uganda, Henry Luke Orimbi, noted that Christians now form 46 per cent of the population of what no longer can be called “the dark continent.” Vibrant worship, colourful banners, and warm embraces showed that Africa made its mark on the participants. As an Orthodox professor from Romania commented: “I will take from the congress fellowship, friendship, love—I encountered much love here.”

“Humility, integrity, simplicity” were the keywords. Delegates from the global north felt humbled by the commitment of sisters and brothers in the global south. Unlike the earlier Lausannes, there was no “Billy Graham razzamatazz” (as I said in a controversial 1989 report on Lausanne II in the *Record*). There was a call for integrity in Christian witness. The so-called “health and wealth gospel” was denounced. “Church leaders,” it confessed, “can be marked by an abuse of power, mismanagement of financial resources, and lack of purity, and fidelity. They sometimes distort scripture to justify greed, immorality, and arrogance.”

Nowhere was this almost penitential mood more evident than as the widow of a recently murdered health worker in Afghanistan addressed the congress. Using the blood-stained notes of a talk her husband had given hours before he was slain, she challenged delegates with his final call to a life of Christ-like self-renunciation and sacrifice. The Anglican Archbishop

of Jos, Nigeria, spoke of several near-death escapes. And the 130-strong Chinese delegation was turned back at the airport as they were about to leave for Cape Town. A sober realism, with a strong affirmation of confidence and trust in a sovereign Lord, resonated throughout the meetings.

Partnership was one of the aims of the congress, bringing together Christians in a wide array of ministries for mutual encouragement and stimulation

Each morning started with an exposition from Ephesians. Six Bible teachers from places as diverse as Colombo, Costa Rica, Minneapolis, Oxford, Nairobi and Cairo spoke for half an hour and set the tone for the day. “The key primary purpose of the congress is not just to network with lots of interesting people but to listen to God’s voice,” stated Lindsay Brown, international director of Lausanne III.

Partnership was one of the aims of the congress, bringing together Christians in a wide array of ministries for mutual encouragement and stimulation. One of the values of a gathering of this size is the networking that takes place. The Global Diaspora Network, and the Younger Leaders Network were but two examples of partnerships formed in Cape Town. The congress also cut across denominational boundaries: there were observers from both the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Delegates were chosen by regional or national committees. Thirty-five per cent were to be female, and 40 per cent under the age of 40.

The Canadian delegation numbered 79. Among these were representatives of First Nations, academics, educational administrators, journeyman pastors, para-church workers, representatives of specialized ministries, denominational leaders, and ministry veterans. Carson Pue of Arrow Leadership, Surrey, B.C., chaired two meetings of the Canadian delegation. The sole Canadian platform speaker was Christine MacMillan, originally from Fredericton, former head of the Salvation Army in Canada and Bermuda, now coordinating their international response to human trafficking out of New York City.

Lausanne III ended with a marathon communion service using the liturgy of the Anglican Church in Kenya. Lindsay Brown spoke, summarizing its impact. First, it provided a ringing affirmation to the uniqueness of Christ and the truth of the biblical gospel. Second, it represented “a fresh challenge to ‘bear witness to Jesus Christ—not only geographically, but in every sphere of society in the realm of ideas.’” Thirdly, a clear statement that “We cannot be driven by competition, this must give way to a spirit of partnership where men and women, as well as people of different ethnicities, join hands under Christ to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth.” And finally, the strengthening of the “new creative initiatives” the congress had spawned.

More than 1,000 segments are available at lausanne.org/cape-town-2010/globalink making it possible, through summaries and discussion questions, to participate in one of the most representative international gatherings of Christians in recent history. ■

Rev. Dr. Don MacLeod is research professor of church history at Tyndale University, Toronto.

The Other Six Days Granola and Green Bibles

MORE INIMITABLE INTERNET FINDINGS. **BY BRADLEY CHILDS**

WEBSITE: **The Simple Way**

Located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Simple Way (also called the Potter Street Community) is not a church per se, but is rather a group of people attempting to find new ways to live as the church within their community. While some might say "hippies" or "granolas," this group self identifies as "new monastics" and began when several ivy-league seminarians went out to live with the homeless. They live in abandoned places, dumpster dive for food, share everything, provide for anyone who asks, grow community gardens, provide for the homeless, addicts and neighbourhood interests. Co-founder Shane Claiborne has served with one of the United States' largest and fastest growing churches (Willow Creek Community) and also in Calcutta with Mother Teresa. **FIND IT @** thesimpleway.org

BIBLE: **The Green Bible**

The Green Bible is just what you might expect it to be. It's a "green-letter" edition of the Bible where passages that speak to God's care for creation are highlighted in green. Endorsed by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Barbara Brown Taylor, Pope John Paul II, N.T. Wright and Brian McLaren, this Bible is loaded with additional quotations, a green topical index, study guides and practical environmental steps anyone can take. Oh, and of course it's printed on recycled paper, using soy-based ink for print and has a raw cotton/linen cover. **FIND IT @** greenletterbible.com

KITSCH: **Information Age Prayer**

Good news! If you're a Roman Catholic and you have some Hail Marys to say or would like to limit a loved one's time in purgatory, Information Age Prayer is here to free up some time by doing those prayers for you. That's right, for a small fee per prayer, Information Age Prayer will have a computer (text to voice) do those prayers for you. But don't worry, due to an increase in business, Muslims can now use this service, too and so can we. Just click on the tab "Protestant" and you're on your way!

FIND IT @ informationageprayer.com

VIDEO: **My name is John Daker**

What do you get when you mix classic church music with Dean Martin's *Amore* on public access television and forget the words? Hilarity! Okay, so maybe it's not your particular cup of tea but I, and millions of other online viewers (and re-mixers) just can't seem to stop watching this clip.

FIND IT @ Search youtube.com for "my name is John Daker."

QUOTE:

"Most people are bothered by those passages of scripture they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand."

—Mark Twain ■

Rev. Brad Childs is minister at First, Regina.



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Letter from India

From Jobat to the Lotus Temple

HOW RELIGION CAN BOTH UNITE AND DIVIDE. BY GUY SMAGGHE

WHEN WE ARRIVED at Jobat Christian Hospital on Sept. 25, the first words from Dr. Wilson, the head of the hospital, were, "You will likely have to head back to Delhi sooner than planned. We will follow the security briefs closely [because] the Ayodhya Verdict will be given on Sept. 30."

The Ayodhya Verdict is a sensitive issue, and the potential for upheaval is high. In 2002, after decades of conflict over the land of Ayodhya, a few Hindu radicals tore down the Babri mosque that was built in the 16th century on that site. The act resulted in riots across India, in which more than 2,000 people died, most of them Muslims. On Sept. 30, the verdict would determine who had rights to the land: Hindus or Muslims. While the hope of many was for a peaceful outcome, people everywhere were preparing for the worst.



PWS&D committee member, Rev. Laura Kavanagh (centre) in India.

The next day Dr. Wilson recommended that we forfeit our plans to visit community health programs in the area. "Public gatherings of more than four people are already forbidden in Indore," Dr. Wilson said. "You should aim at reaching Delhi prior to the verdict. There you will be safe and able to leave the country."

As the three of us made our way back to Delhi—myself, Rev. Laura

Kavanagh from Victoria, B.C., and Michelle Verwey, an intern teaching at the nursing college in Indore—we flew over the refurbished stadium preparing to house the Commonwealth Games later that week. Security was tight everywhere as the city was welcoming athletes from the world over. Having full security mechanisms in place was also good preparation for the verdict.

With extra time, we decided to visit the Lotus Temple, which is the Baha'i house of worship. The Baha'i writings say that "...the purpose of places of worship and edifices for adoration is simply that of unity, in order that various nations, divergent races, varying souls, may gather there and among them amity, love and accord may be realized."

The place is a perfect piece of magnificent architecture open to all. In the sanctuary, or prayer hall as they call it, silence reigns, only broken hourly for a few minutes of scripture readings from holy books of the main religions. It is a place for silent prayer and meditation for people of all religious backgrounds. Baha'i tenets of Oneness of God, Oneness of Religions and Oneness of Humankind permeate the whole place.

On Sept. 30, the Ayodhya Verdict recognized that the holy site should be split between Hindus and Muslims. India breathed a sigh of relief. No riots emerged. No one died this time around. Both sides will appeal the decision. As my flight home lifted off, I thought that both sides should visit the Lotus Temple more often in the search for a settlement in this story. ■

Guy Smagghe is senior program coordinator at PWS&D.

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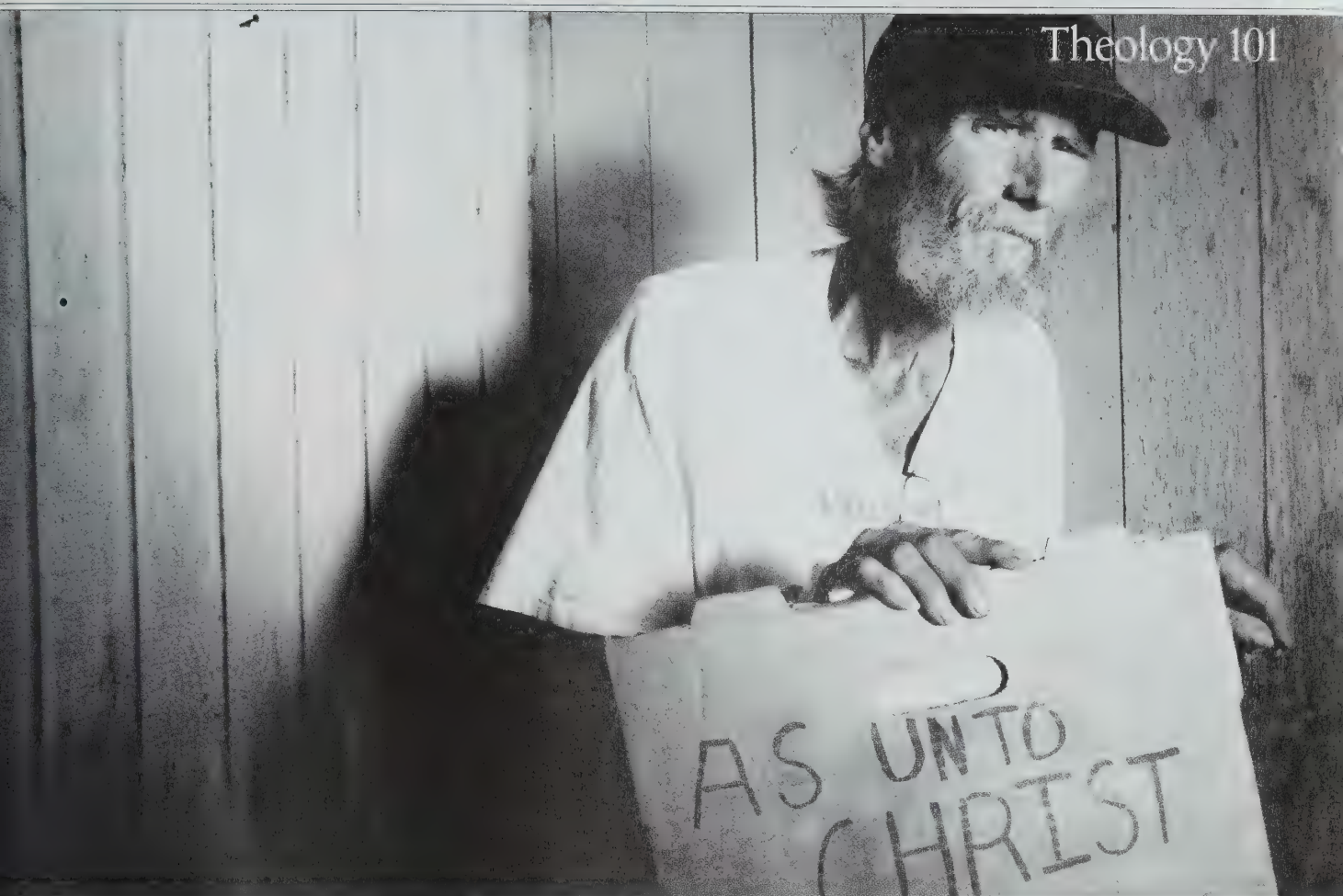
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We're In This Together

GOD AND THE POOR. BY GLENN INGLIS

When I was about 10, I received a gold star in Sunday school for reciting the Beatitudes, the introduction to what we call the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," are words that stayed with me and which gave me comfort in a time when my spirit was indeed poor and broken. In a way, they brought me to a decision that led me to Knox College.

It seems strange now, but it was only at seminary that I really took a

close look at Luke's Sermon on the Plain, (Luke 6:20-26) where there was another version of Jesus' blessings. This time Jesus simply said, blessed are you who are poor and blessed are you who are hungry and blessed are you who weep. Attached were three woes which I had never heard read or preached in church: Woe to you who are rich, woe to you who are full, woe to you who are laughing.

These were intoxicating words for me, for I had an overwhelming desire to change the world. I was angry

with those, now even including poor Matthew, who spiritualized the gospel. For me, these were the authentic words, the holy words, the words that called the church to action. ➤

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Yet I am still angry with the way theologians in the developed world critiqued liberation theology. Basically they said, 'It does not take sin seriously.' This coming from people who were well fed and well paid, living in the heart of rapacious societies

Around that time, Jim Wallis, the editor of *Sojourners*, had taken his Bible and cut out all 2,000-plus verses that dealt directly with poverty. When he presented this 'holey Bible' to his congregation, the people were not amused. But the truth is there: the Bible has a lot to say about poverty.

These enthusiasms fed into the movement called liberation theology, wedded to neo-Marxist analysis, and seeding radical church movements in Central America and South Africa in particular. Alas, mass movements, no matter how well inspired, seldom produce the results desired. Like boy scouts taking grandma across the street against her will, the poor do not always identify with their liberators, nor are the liberationists without ulterior motives.

Yet I am still angry with the way theologians in the developed world critiqued liberation theology. Basically they said, "It does not take sin seriously." This coming from people who were well fed and well paid, living in the heart of rapacious societies. Jesus also said something about logs in one's eye.

Welcome to the new millennium,

the triumph of capitalism, the 'end of history' and the TV evangelists' new product line called the prosperity gospel. This triumphalism lasted all of the biblical seven years. With the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the capitalist system teetered and, despite historic interventions, the world economic system is ill. More people are poor, the gap between rich and poor has widened, and there is deep anxiety throughout the world.

What do we do? What can we say?

Long ago, Joshua cleared away the enemies of the Jews and God's people entered the Promised Land. But neither Joshua nor anyone after him was able to eradicate the shrines to Baal. The persistence of this god brought the wrath of Yahweh and the fury of the prophets, but was never banished. Baal offered fertility, prosperity and positive results—along with sensual pleasure. Sort of like Mammon, sort of like ... the market.

I am always amazed at the god-like qualities attributed to the Market. It is just, true, and rewards hard work and righteousness. But it needs to be coddled, adjusted, fed and burped. Right now it is sick and so needs the constant attention of economists and finance ministers. We are told it may be ill for a decade but in the long term will make a full recovery. Thanks be to God, Mammon, Baal.

We have designed a world economy that is built on the need to grow and to consume. Yet nature is crying, denuded, languishing. One billion people are hungry, two billion live on less than two dollars a day. And everyone is anxious.

Jesus' economics are simple but radical. Jesus was a poor man but neither anxious nor depressed. He tells us to note the birds of the air and flowers of the field and remember that if God so feeds and clothes these, how much more will He care about us. So don't worry and don't be anxious. The response even from those who claim him as Lord and Saviour is basically ... yeah, right!

Jesus also had very harsh words about those who worship Mammon, who think only of their stomachs and neglect the poor. The response of the

disciple is, 'Sure glad I'm not rich!'

It is most clear to me that we have individualized the gospel, made it literal where we agree and metaphorical where we don't. It also seems clear to me as well that the Bible needs those 2,000 verses about poverty. God's heart is with the poor. God despises our worship when we neglect justice (Isaiah 58). What is pure worship, asks James (1:27), but to care for orphans and widows in their distress and keep oneself unstained by the world?

By shaving off the economics of Jesus we have created a gospel that is user friendly. We can spiritualize our way out of anything. We can work on our spirituality and forget about the poor. Except God doesn't forget.

In the 1960s, Vatican II formulated the gospel response that God has a preferential option for the poor. Jesus promises the poor his kingdom, participation in his eternal reign. Jesus' depiction of the fulfillment of the kingdom is a beggar's banquet.

The world economy teeters, extremists and populists grow in strength, and the church is in decline. The church's response to poverty is not meant to be the heroic sacrifice of a few. Rather our response is to be as part of Christ's body, the people of God who know that their basic calling is to be the heart and hands of Jesus Christ in an anxious world that always tilts to idolatry.

One of the first hymns written by a Malawian Christian has this first line: "Poor man Jesus was one of our kind." I often doubt that I have the courage to be one of Jesus' kind. It takes more courage than I can muster or grace than I can receive. That is why we are joined to the body of Christ who, though rich, for our sakes made himself poor. And that is why my gospel refrain is: We're in this together! ■

Rev. Glenn Inglis is a mission partner with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. Currently he is the director of the synod's Health and Development Commission.



St. John the Evangelist from the St. Thomas altarpiece by artist Pedro Berruguete, oil painting on canvas.

Come and See...

THE CHURCH BEGINS WITH AN INVITATION TO STRANGERS. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

Jan. 16, 2011 reading:

Second Sunday after Epiphany
John 1:29-42, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

There's a neat little detail buried in our gospel today. Our reading from John rings' big bells. The other John announces, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Big note for the first readers. John the baptizer passes the torch to Jesus. Some of John's

disciples go after Jesus. Big note for the church: Jesus' first disciples are named. Including Peter.

Don't overlook one detail. It's four o'clock in the afternoon when the first three meet Jesus. Time and geography don't count for much in John's gospel. When he bothers to mention either, he tells us much more than the hour or the place.

Four o'clock. The 10th hour since dawn. Near the close of the day. Time to make arrangements for the night. Jesus

could have said, "See you tomorrow!" Andrew, Simon Peter, and the one whose name we never learn ask, "Where are you staying?" Jesus answers, "Come and see." They go, and eat, and share an evening. Next morning, they go along with Jesus. They and Jesus invite others to come, too.

Where's Jesus going? Home, to Galilee. It begins with simple hospitality. A welcome home.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that God called them "into the ➤

fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." That word "fellowship" is important. The Greek word behind it means "community." A kind of community where all share, and participate fully in common life.

Not a family, which you enter only by birth, or the consent of those who were born into it. There's another New Testament word for that. Not a club, a society, a lodge. Something you join for what you can get out of it. There are Greek words for those associations. It's the fellowship, the communion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This kind of community acts out hospitality by putting a potluck supper at the centre of its life. Its members don't become carbon copies of each other. They want to grow into the likeness of Jesus. They welcome strangers. They even go out and find people who can't pay them back for their welcome. This upsets all social conventions. It's dangerous, but they won't stop.

What are we willing to risk to practise the hospitality of Jesus? "Well," we might say, "our doors are open to anyone who wants to come in." If they come in, what will happen? Well, we hope they'll stay and become like us. But a lot of them seem to wander away. Guess they just don't fit here, after all. We figure anyone who comes should just blend in after awhile.

The first Christians were remarkable in their world because they welcomed anyone who came to them. To anyone and everyone they met they said, "Come and see!" They trusted in the power of God, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to help them build a community.

The kind of community Jesus began to gather when he first said, "Come and see." And welcomed three strangers to spend time and share life with him.

"Strangers." Interesting word! In the language of the New Testament, there's a word that has more than one

meaning. *Xenos* means "stranger," "alien." It also means "new," "unheard of." Most of the time in the New Testament, the word means one or the other.

But there's another sense of that word. It also means "host." It means the person who shelters the stranger, the newcomer, the traveller. It's used that way just once in the New Testament (Romans 16:23). Once is enough to remind us that, whenever we say "stranger," God calls us to become hosts.

A form of *xenos* pops up in the New Testament in other places. The word is *philoxenia*. It means "love of the stranger." It's usually translated "hospitality." According to today's gospel, the church began with an invitation to come home for supper. The church begins with indiscriminate, Christ-like love of strangers. ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives and teaches in Halifax.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



Photo credit: Lawrence Pentelow

When Colonel John Bayne Maclean, a child of the manse and founder of Maclean's magazine, died in 1950, he left 250 acres of his beloved "Crieff Hills Farm" to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, along with a generous endowment to provide continued monetary support to help maintain the property. Today Crieff Hills Community, near Guelph, Ontario, provides "a place apart to come together" for hundreds who come each year for conferences, workshops and personal retreats. Through Colonel Maclean's planned gift, his farmland continues to provide a rich harvest of lives transformed and renewed.

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Auschwitz

Going Backwards

AFTER 20 YEARS OF DEMOCRACY, EASTERN EUROPE IS SHOWING SIGNS OF OLD PREJUDICES.

BY TOM CHILDS

In 1989, communist regimes across Eastern Europe toppled in quick succession. There was great hope and promise for a better, prosperous and more tolerant society. However, after 20 years of democracy there has been a wide range of results. Germany and the Czech Republic have done well and many former Soviet nations have entered the European Union. However, the economic downturn of 2008 hit this region harder than the western world. Many of these countries had relied heavily on foreign aid and credit since becoming democratic nations. Most had to be bailed out more than once by the International Monetary Fund and the European

Union in amounts running into the hundreds of billions of euros.

This period of time has also seen the emergence of disturbing patterns from the past. When I was last in Hungary I was shocked and greatly disturbed to hear people, whom I would consider compassionate and Christian, telling me that the problems of their country's past were mainly caused by the Jews and Roma or "gypsies." They were very open in telling me that the Jews had killed Jesus, and that they had brought communism to Hungary after World War I. It was the gypsies who had corrupted their society.

Hate crimes have escalated in Hungary and adjoining countries. It has seen the emergence of neo-

This period of time has also seen the emergence of disturbing patterns from the past

fascist groups like the Jobbik, or Hungarian Guard. This ultra right wing group is openly anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant and anti-Roma. A Hungarian radio station, with over one million listeners, is openly anti-Semitic on air. In a small village of 1,200 people, less than 50 kilometres from the capital city of Budapest, ➤



At times the great pain and need in the world often seems overwhelming, even to the most optimistic person

there have been over three dozen hate crimes in the past five years against Roma. This includes the murder of 10 people, among them a five-year-old boy named Robert and his father.

There is a great need to grow and move ahead together as individuals, countries and churches to make a more just and equitable world for every person. This starts with the acknowledgement of the mistakes of the past. It continues in working to eliminate old prejudices and hatreds. An encouraging step which many countries, like South Africa and Australia, have taken to achieve this goal is in the reconciliation of its past. Within Canada we have made progress towards this with our First Nations communities. These are only steps on a long road. Certainly Eastern Europe does not have exclusivity on

intolerance or hatred.

The Eastern European Church will continue to be greatly challenged to be a leader in this reconciliation and healing. While finances are always a struggle, money alone won't solve this. It will require our combined and continued prayers for the people in Eastern Europe and around the world who are suffering and being marginalized. Prayers are also needed for our missionaries who are working to make this happen, like David and Anna Pandy-Szekeres and Mary Gorombey in Hungary, and Brian Johnston in Romania.

At times the great pain and need in the world often seems overwhelming, even to the most optimistic person. In the Jewish Talmud it says, "Whoever saves one life saves the whole world." In our walk with

Christ we must always lead the way toward making this a reality. Until healing and reconciliation can happen in Eastern Europe (and all areas of the world), with the church taking the lead, it will remain mired in the past. The church (and I include all) has not always been stellar in its response to what is happening, and has often been complicit in unmentionable acts. We are saved through our Lord. We are commissioned by him to go out into the world and serve others. Let our collective hope and mission begin in praying, and helping that one person in need. ■

Tom Childs is a member at St. Andrew's, Scarborough, Ont. He has travelled to Eastern Europe on mission trips and now lives in Peterborough, Ont.



The Roma

EUROPE'S CONTINUING VICTIMS. BY ALAN DAVIES

Who are the Roma? Scholars believe they originated in India, leaving in several migrations in the 11th century, possibly because of a Muslim invasion from what is now Afghanistan. Their Indian origin is revealed in their Sanskrit-based language and in their special skills and trades, notably music and metalworking; it is also revealed in their tightly knit communalism and certain cleanliness laws stemming from the Hindu caste system. Slowly moving westward, they sojourned in Persia and the Greek regions of the shrinking Byzantine Empire (modern Turkey) to cross the Dardanelles into Europe.

Dark skin, silver and gold jewelry,

outlandish dress, and fortune-telling talents lent an aura of fear and fascination to their presence and soon defamatory legends arose on the superstitious soil of late mediaeval Christendom. Often with encouragement from the church, people accused them of spying for the Muslims, a charge that perversely reappeared in the recent conflict over Kosovo. They were also accused of having no morals, of stealing and eating Christian babies, of failing to help Joseph, Mary and Jesus in their flight from Herod, of forging the nails with which Jesus was crucified, of occultism, witchcraft and demonism, libels reinforced by their alien appearance and nomadic lifestyle.

Antipathy soon turns into persecution, and the Holy Roman Empire issued

anti-Roma edicts calling for their expulsion from the imperial realms, especially in Germany. Men who did not leave were threatened with servitude in the galleys. Since these laws were unevenly enforced, the Roma managed to survive, but only by staying on constant alert. If for any reason they were arrested by local authorities, floggings, torture and decapitation often followed. There were even mass executions. Unlike the Jews, most Roma were nominal Christians (sometimes forcibly baptized), but this did not remove the social stigma.

The Protestant churches proved as anti-Roma as the Catholic bishops. With the eventual rise of "race science" in the 19th century, innate criminal traits were assigned to gypsy nature as proof of their biological inferiority. ➤

Dark skin, silver and gold jewelry, outlandish dress, and fortune-telling talents lent an aura of fear and fascination

In this way the so-called "gypsy problem" (in German, *die zigeunerfrage*) like the "Jewish problem" became a racial problem, an ominous classification. Old statutes inherited from the Weimar Republic dealing with the "gypsy plague" were buttressed with new "scientific" information distinguishing between pure gypsies, half gypsies, and one-quarter gypsies: a counterpart to the anti-Jewish Nuremberg laws. Even one-eighth gypsies found themselves in the danger zone of deportation to Auschwitz.

No one knows exactly how many Roma perished at Nazi hands, but the number is certainly large, somewhere between 500,000 and 1.5 million. Many

were shot by mobile killing squads in the wake of Hitler's advancing legions; many died in the death camps, especially from 1942-1945. Their supposed "Aryan blood" did not save them, even if a few high ranking Nazis flirted with the notion that they belonged to the same Aryan or Indo-Germanic race as the Germans themselves. Dr. Josef Mengele liked to select gypsy children for his barbaric medical experiments and even adopted a small gypsy boy as his personal mascot before casting him into the ovens.

As Jews speak of the Holocaust ("burnt offering") or Shoah ("catastrophic destruction"), so the Roma also have coined a special name for their terrible fate in modern times: Baro Porrajmos or "great devouring." The image is highly evocative. Unlike the mass murder of the Jews, the crimes committed against the Roma drew little attention following the Second World War, either in Germany or elsewhere. Emil Fackenheim, a Jewish philosopher, once described the destruction of the Roma as more tragic in one sense in that no one ever bothered to commemorate them! Nor did they receive much compensation, although the German parliament did

finally acknowledge German responsibility for their suffering in 1985.

Since Europe to this day has failed to purge itself of anti-gypsy myths and their harsh consequences, many Roma are attracted to Canada. Canadian society, they believe, offers the chance of a better life. However, prejudice is contagious, and on Jan. 21, 1999, the Immigration and Refugee Board rejected the refugee claims of two Hungarian Roma families, forcing them to return to Hungary. This decision was overturned on March 27, 2006 by the Federal Court of Appeal which ruled that the IRB action was biased and designed to throw cold water on other Roma applicants. Many of the latter were expelled from Canada with their Canadian-born children in the interval. Because Hungary and the Czech Republic now belong to the European Union, a facile excuse for rejecting Roma appeals is readily available. Are not the EU nations, on paper at least, committed to human rights? But violations persist and in some cases are worse than in the past because of the rise of neo-nationalism in economic hard times and the familiar search for scapegoats.

I was told at the Roma Community Centre in Toronto that somewhere between 40,000 and 60,000 Roma or persons of Roma descent live in Canada, a country of haven since the early 20th century when the first immigrants arrived. For understandable reasons, they prefer to keep a low profile but retain a strong sense of their unique identity. They are highly entrepreneurial, with only a small number living on welfare and few instances of family breakdown. There are no 'Romatowns' in Canadian cities as there are Chinatowns or Koreatowns or Italian or Portuguese or even Jewish neighbourhoods. They do not travel in picturesque caravans and many have lost the Romani language. ■

Alan Davies is a retired professor of religion. He lives in Toronto.

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Having Your Pie

AND EATING IT, TOO. BY STANLEY S. MACLEAN

With nearly a hundred books between them, Eugene Peterson and N.T. Wright are two of the most prolific Christian writers today. Peterson's bailiwick is biblical spirituality; N.T. Wright's is New Testament theology and history. Under the above titles, Peterson and Wright deal with the subject of eschatology in complementary ways. Peterson deals with it in terms of the individual; Wright in terms of the whole world. And while the former explores the significance of eschatology for personal growth, the latter explores its significance for the mission of the church.

Eschatology means last things, such as the return of Christ, resurrection, last judgment, heaven and hell. Nowadays, last things are really the last things the church talks about. There are various reasons for this. A chief one is that people are mainly interested in what Christianity can do for them now. How can it make me happier, healthier and wealthier? They don't have the patience to wait for pie-in-the-sky-when-you-die. They want their pie now.

Well, Peterson and Wright both assure us that we can have that pie now—though it is probably not the kind we had pictured. Wright's catchphrase is "heaven is not our home;" Peterson's is "practice resurrection." In the same vein as Wright, Peterson insists that "this is the country that we live in. Here. Now." So not only did all those medieval, heaven-gazing monks get it wrong, so did their Protestant forefathers (see Richard Baxter's *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*).

Practice Resurrection, which is actually an exposition of the Letter to Ephesians, is the fifth and final book in Peterson's spiritual theology series

(*Conversations*). "Practice resurrection" is a strange imperative. How can we practice something that we don't have? The answer is that since Christ has been resurrected, Christians share in his resurrection. This practice is a matter then of "growing up in Christ," of becoming spiritually mature. Peterson maintains that an emphasis on spiritual growth is something that is desperately needed in the church today. He chides the modern (Protestant) church for idolizing the "adolescent" and for becoming an "ecclesiastical business," thinking about growth only in quantitative terms. Our fixation with the present, then, is not itself the problem; it is what we are fixed upon.

But if Christians want to practice resurrection, they must practice going to church regularly. Given the church's tarnished image today, it is hard to convince people that church is a great source of spiritual growth. Peterson as-

Books Reviewed:

Practice Resurrection:

A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ

BY EUGENE H. PETERSON

William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010

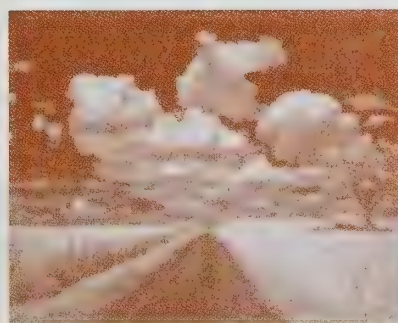
Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church

BY N.T. WRIGHT

HarperOne, 2008

sure us, though, that there is more to church than meets the eyes. The largest part, the invisible part, is the Triune God, who gave us the church and animates it. And it is only God's grace—Christ and his spiritual gifts, the community of believers, the Lord's Supper—that makes the practice of resurrection possible. Grace begins with God's call to walk in the resurrected life. "When God's calling and our walking fit, we are growing up in Christ."

Worship and love are two of the chief marks of Christian maturity. They are intertwined. Worship is ➤

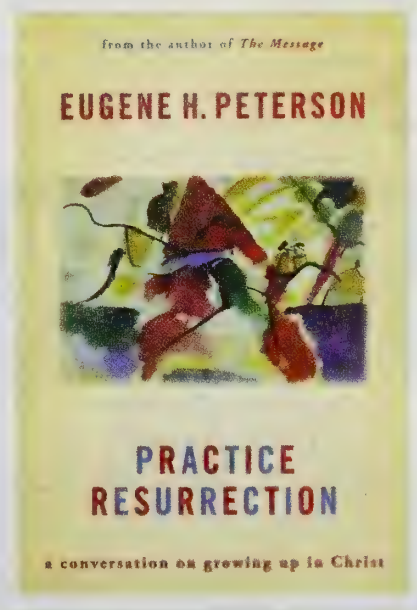


SURPRISED BY HOPE



Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection,
and the Mission of the Church

N. T. WRIGHT



Given the church's tarnished image today, it is hard to convince people that church is a great source of spiritual growth

essential, for the church is only partly about us. It is mostly about God. The most important kind of worship is the one centred on the Lord's Supper. Here also we learn to practice love, for we meet God who first loved us.

Relationality is at the heart of Peterson's definition of Christian maturity. This is another reason why he directs us to church. The love and worship found there are essentially relational. "In the act of worship we cultivate a life of love in company with the Trinity of love, and in company with men and women and children who are there with us, all of us practicing resurrection."

Of course, there is the risk that the practice of resurrection will become another human project. Peterson warns us that "Christian maturity is not about doing more for God; it is God doing more in and through us." Certainly, Christians have duties and responsibilities, but these things should never be set against grace. It is not God and grace versus us and our works. God's grace ("gift") is given in His works (creation, incarnation, etc.) Likewise, the nature of our work is to provide a container for His grace.

What is extraordinary about *Practice Resurrection* is not the spirituality, but the containers in which this spirituality is communicated to us. Peterson never gives a lesson apart from an apt personal anecdote or a striking metaphor to drive home his point.

There is no mistaking a mystical streak in Peterson's thought; yet it is not an otherworldly, abstract mysticism but a Trinitarian, down-to-earth kind.

Surprised by Hope, covering three big topics—and then some—is a more comprehensive work than the first. Yet Wright's book is governed by two challenging questions: "What are we waiting for? And what are we going to do about it in the meantime?" Wright feels that most Christians have the wrong answers to these questions, because they mistakenly believe they are being saved from the world, rather than for it. The result is that Christians are hoping for nothing more than a disembodied life in heaven; and consequently they are nonchalant in regard to the world's social and environmental problems.

Wright puts this lame Christian hope down to a dearth of faith in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. He points us to the early church, where faith in the resurrection was foundational. This explains why the first Christians did not merely look forward to heaven; rather, they embraced a "two-step belief about the future: first, death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly remade world."

Yet our personal hopes must be set within a larger hope, since what happened to Jesus is the prototype for what will happen to all of creation. Hence

not only do we need to look back at his resurrection but also forward to his coming again, when all of creation will be renewed. If Christians lose faith in Christ's ascension and return, their hope degenerates into either a longing for the "purely 'spiritual'" heaven or a presumptuous drive to perfect the world through socio-economic progress.

The third part of the book examines the implications of Jesus' resurrection for the mission of the church. This part is the most provocative of the three, since here Wright advocates a "collaborative eschatology." This means that God invites Christians to be "rescuing stewards over creation," to "build for the Kingdom" alongside Him. In this regard, Wright believes the church's mission should be concentrated on three areas: justice, beauty and evangelism.

Many evangelicals, though, disregard the first two areas. Why polish the brass on a sinking ship? But Wright thinks this attitude is clearly at variance with the spirit of the New Testament. "What you do in the present," whether it be "painting, preaching ... building hospitals, (or) digging wells ... will last into God's future."

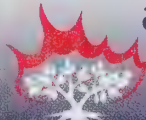
Of course, there is a real danger that this building for the Kingdom will be hijacked by the secular "cult of progress." This is why we must bear in mind that "God builds God's Kingdom." Humans only share in God's work. Further, the church needs to distinguish between the "final Kingdom and the present anticipations of it." The new creation will be perfected only after Christ's final advent.

Wright is a masterful writer and scholar, and this trait shines through in this book, which combines breadth of learning with wit, wisdom and imagination. If there is one book that should get the church talking more about last things, this is surely it. ■

Dr. Stanley MacLean teaches at the Kookmin University in Seoul, Korea.

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Respect for Humans

ARE HUMANS JUST ANOTHER ANIMAL ON THE TUNDRA?

BY MARGARET SOMERVILLE

Pick up the newspaper or watch the TV or listen to the radio any morning and these will be some of the stories you are likely to hear: euthanasia, reproductive technology, shortage of physicians, medical mistakes, scarce healthcare resources, an aging population, new “miracle” medical technologies, vaccination against a feared virus, HIV/AIDS, organ transplants and so on. These stories have a medical and scientific theme that runs through them all. But they also have another commonality: they all raise important ethical

issues, sometimes unprecedented ones. That means they place us in situations that involve deciding on the values that should govern these situations and, often, conflict about what those values should be.

Moreover, which values ultimately prevail will help to determine what our collective values as a society will be. Whereas in the past we largely found our shared values in the context of participating in a religion, in a secular society we find many of them within the context of medicine and science. The reasons include that

we all personally relate to medicine and science, what happens in those contexts matters to us personally and to those we love; it affects our lives for good or ill, so we care about which values prevail in them. And new developments in medicine and science are raising unprecedented ethical issues, issues no other humans before us have ever had to face. It matters that we all have some understanding of these issues if we are to make wise decisions about the values that should govern them.

But I am not going to deal with ►

New developments in medicine and science are raising unprecedented ethical issues, issues no other humans before us have ever had to face

those issues, expressly, in this short article, although I hope we can discuss some of them at the 2011 women's conference. Rather, I want to focus on a question the answer to which, I believe, affects all of them. Here's that question: Is there something "special" about being human?

Recently, an editor asked me what I believed was currently the world's most dangerous idea. I replied, "The idea that there is nothing special about being human and, therefore, humans do not deserve 'special respect,' as compared with other animals or even robots." This response might seem anodyne and a cop out, but I'd like to try to convince you otherwise.

Whether humans are special—sometimes referred to as human exceptionalism or uniqueness—and, therefore, deserve special respect is a controversial and central question in bioethics and, I believe, how we answer it will affect how we answer all the other difficult ethical questions the new technoscience raises and will have a major impact on many important ethical issues.

Although I will frame this discussion in a very limited context of whether humans merit greater respect than animals and robots, it should be kept in mind that not seeing human beings and human life as deserving special respect would have very broad and serious impact far outside this context. It could affect matters that range from respect for human rights, to justifications for armed conflict, how we treat prisoners, how we run

our health care and aged persons' care systems, the ethical and legal tones of our societies, and so on.

Although all living beings deserve respect, which certainly excludes cruelty to animals, traditionally humans have been given special respect, which brings with it special protections, especially of life. In practice, we have implemented this special respect through the idea of personhood, which embodies two concepts: all humans are persons and no animals are persons. But the concept of "universal human personhood"—the idea that all humans deserve special respect simply because they are human—and excluding animals from personhood are both being challenged.

Some philosophers are arguing that at least certain animals should be regarded as persons in order to give them the same rights and protections as humans. Alternatively, they argue that humans should be regarded as just another animal, which results in the same outcome, a loss of special respect for human beings.

Princeton philosopher, Peter Singer takes this latter approach. He believes that distinguishing humans from other animals and, as a result, treating animals differently, is a form of wrongful discrimination he calls "speciesism." In short, he rejects the claim that humans are special and, therefore, deserve special respect.

Rather, he believes the respect owed to a living being should depend only on avoiding suffering to it, not on whether or not the being is human. That means that what we do, or not do, to humans in order not to inflict suffering on them, we should not do to animals; and what we do to animals to relieve their suffering and regard as ethical, we should also do for humans. Consequently, we don't eat humans, therefore, we shouldn't eat animals. We allow euthanasia for animals, therefore, we should, likewise, allow it for humans.

To such philosophers, the attribution of personhood should not depend, yet again, on being human, but on having

certain characteristics or capacities to function in certain ways—for example, being self aware; having a sense of one's history and, perhaps, of a future; and possessing a capacity to relate to others.

Following logically on that, these philosophers then argue that some seriously mentally disabled humans and babies, who are among the most vulnerable, weakest and most in need members of our societies, are not persons, and therefore do not have the protections personhood brings, for instance protection of their right to life. And, likewise, they propose that at least some animals should be regarded as non-human persons on the basis that these animals have some of the characteristics of personhood that the humans they regard as non-persons lack. They propose that animals which are self-conscious, intelligent, and have free will and emotions comparable to those of humans, should be treated as non-human persons.

But this idea that simply being human does not mean one deserves special respect, rather, the respect owed to a being depends on its having certain attributes, is not only a serious danger to vulnerable humans. It could also lead to situations in which robots would be seen to deserve greater respect than humans and ethical restrictions on what we may do to change human life would become inoperative.

People who believe the kind and degree of respect owed to an entity depends on its intelligence, would argue that some super-intelligent robots will deserve more respect than humans. They define intelligence narrowly, as logical, cognitive mentation and, for them, these robots are more intelligent than any humans. This approach has far-reaching and serious implications, well beyond the degree of respect that should be shown to an individual human, as compared with an individual robot.

If there is nothing special about being human, there is no essence of our humanness that we must hold in trust for future generations. That means we are free to use the new technoscience, as

the transhumanists advocate we should, to alter humans so that they become post-human, that is, not human at all as we know it. In other words, there would be many less or perhaps no ethical barriers to seeking the transhumanists' utopian goal, that humans will become an obsolete model. This would be achieved through our redesigning ourselves using technoscience—or perhaps robots doing so. Instead of our designing them, they could redesign us!

We used to regard humans as special on the basis that they had a soul, a divine spark, and animals did not. But, today, far from everyone accepts the concept of a soul. Most people, however, at least act as though we humans have a human spirit, a metaphysical, although not necessarily supernatural, element as part of the essence of our humanness. Some philosophers see the ethical and moral sense humans have as distinguishing humans from animals, which also have consciousness. They believe humans are special because of this moral sense and, therefore, deserve special respect.

I'm an incurable optimist and I believe that open-minded persons of goodwill, whatever their beliefs, will conclude that humans deserve special respect in the sense that there are some things we should not do to humans, even if we might do them to animals or robots, although what we currently do to animals needs very careful ethical consideration.

Implementing and maintaining special respect for humans will require that we recognize humans as having innate human dignity that must be respected, and that we regard as unethical interventions that contravene that dignity, such as designing our children, making a baby from two same-sex people, creating human-animal hybrids, cloning humans, using human embryos as a manufacturing plant to produce therapeutic agents, euthanasia, and, with the new neuroscience, perhaps most worrying of all, designing, controlling or intervening on our minds.

It's true that we need to have greater respect for all life, not just human life. But implementing that respect should not be by way of denigrating respect for humans and human life, which equating humans to animals and to robots does. We are not just another animal in the forest or another robot in the laboratory and promoting the idea that we are is, indeed, a very dangerous one.

Postscript: After writing this article, I was curious to know what some of my friends and colleagues would consider to be the world's most dangerous idea at present. When I asked them, a large majority answered, without hesitation, "religion." That caused me to ponder how their choice correlated with my choice.

Whatever they believe, the adherents of militant fundamentalist religions, or any other militant fundamentalism, certainly do not act according to a principle that all humans deserve

special respect. Like the secularists, they also categorize people, in their case, as believers or infidels and believe only the former deserve respect. To the extent that my colleagues see religion as a root cause of this lack of respect for some people and view that as a serious harm, my most dangerous idea and theirs are concordant. But, over millennia, most religions have been the main institutions carrying and passing on to future generations the idea that humans are special and deserve special respect. So, from that perspective, our most dangerous ideas are in direct conflict.

This dual use potential sounds an important warning. As with all ideas, even the idea that humans are special, or the practice of religion, can be used not only for good but also for harm. We need to be aware, always, that we must seek to maximize the former and to minimize the latter. ■

Margaret Somerville is the founding director of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University, Montreal. She is a recipient of UNESCO's Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science. A popular commentator and editorialist, she is author of The Ethical Canary: Science, Society, and the Human Spirit, published in 2001.

Somerville will be the keynote speaker at Look In, Shout Out, a national Presbyterian women's conference, May 20-23, organized by the Women's Missionary Society and Atlantic Mission Society.



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CAN YOU IMAGINE

ON HOW THE GOSPELS
CAN MAKE YOU
WONDERFULLY INTERESTING,
AND SOMEWHAT WEIRD.

BY RICHARD TOPPING ILLUSTRATION BY VIOLET LEMAY

ILLUSTRATION BY VIOLET LEMAY/ANNA GOODSON



A well-meaning business friend of mine sent me a little tidbit on how a corporate culture change guru is effecting change in a car company. He thought it would be applicable to church life.



powers; for apart from the liberating grace of God in Jesus Christ, the will is in bondage to varieties of self-interest, which we try to pass off as our “free” choices. And reason manufactures idols, gods made over again in our image. Nothing “new” here. There is no reference to the renewing and liberating grace of God. This account features human willing and acting apart from what God does.

A lively sense of the agency of God among the baptized and in the world is not fundamental in much of business literature. I know there are analogies

between “organizations” but the Spirit is promised to the church and the Spirit is no marginal consideration. Christ is with and among us. And that, in our Reformed and reforming tradition, has always been the basis of our reforming. We are not Reformed and reforming according to *Harvard Business Review*, *Psychology Today*, *Scientific American* or Deepak Chopra but according to the Word of God.

Listen to Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth on the relationship between gospel and culture.

Bonhoeffer writes, “The present is not where the present age announces its claim before Christ, but where the present age stands before the claims of Christ.” (*No Rusty Swords*)

Karl Barth writes, “It is not the case that the exposition of Holy Scripture must finally issue in answering the so-called burning questions of the present day, that if possible it will acquire meaning and force as it is able to give an illuminating answer to the questions of the present generation. We cannot know what the real present is, what are its burning questions, who and what are, ‘our generation,’ ‘the modern man,’ etc. In a very real sense this will not appear until the Bible opens up before us, to give us correct and infallible information concerning ourselves, and our real questions, concerns and needs.” (*Dogmatics*)

Barth and Bonhoeffer make the same Reformed point: The gospel of Jesus Christ is not raw material to make serviceable to what we or the present age identify as “felt needs.” This move, which we make when we take a survey approach to what we will make of the church, threatens to destroy the integrity of the Christian message. And indeed this is what too often happens. As the theologian Willimon reminds us, how seeker-sensitive do we want to be when what many people are seeking is illegal and immoral?

On the other hand, this does not mean we don’t beg, borrow and steal ideas that might be serviceable to the

The line he thought would be edifying for us ecclesiastical types was this: “It’s easier to act your way to a new way of thinking than to think your way to a new way of acting.”

What a great sound bite. What a delightful little maxim to repeat. The slight problem is that it isn’t true and it is especially untrue where it comes to the Christian and church life.

Both autonomous willing or thinking are not going to take us to anything new if we take the general thrust of the Reformed tradition (and frankly the gospel) seriously on both “will” and “reason.” This is overconfidence in human

gospel from outside scripture, from the present day; scripture itself does this. We don't want to be fundamentalist and sectarian and isolationist. It does mean, however, that borrowing ought to be scrutinized by the gospel the idea serves. It means our borrowings are ad hoc and provisional, not systematic and final.

Listen to Augustine: "If those who are called philosophers ... have said things which are indeed true and are well accommodated to our faith, they should not be feared; rather, what they have said should be taken from them as from unjust possessors and converted to our use." (*On Christian Doctrine*)

There is however a huge proviso: lift and loot, if, and only if, what you seize can be bent, and shaped and accommodated to our faith. Please note the direction of the traffic here. What is borrowed for Christian thought and practice (evangelism, worship, mission and preaching) must yield to the gospel.

Pagan loot must be accommodated to Christ, not Christ to pagan loot.

And so, grab every golden idea you can get—beg, borrow and steal from *Harvard Business Review*, *Newsweek*, *Harper's*, *Scientific American*, the *Presbyterian Record* or even *O Magazine* (although you should always be suspicious of a magazine that has the same person's picture on every cover); in any case, borrow from the philosophers, the social scientists, Madison Avenue, too. Collect up intellectual, strategic, critical and constructive loot of every sort.

However, be careful what you borrow. Always remember that the loot Israel lifted on the way to the Promised Land became serviceable to the Egypt that was still in them. The golden ideas they borrowed became an idolatrous calf in the wilderness. We think we modestly borrow and what happens: the revenge of the Egyptians—the Christian gospel gets hijacked by self-indulgence and idolatry. Think prosperity gospel.

In a 2005 *Harper's* article entitled *The Christian Paradox*, Bill McKibben argued that "the Christian gospel has been hijacked by a culture of unrelenting self-obsession ... and a series of causes that do not reflect his [Christ's] teachings." McKibben makes a powerful case that throughout North America, church has become disturbingly conventional, and that leaders focus relentlessly on "you and your needs." He says that with the help of clergy Americans have made golden idols of themselves—become a nation of terrified, self-obsessed idols. He concludes with this haunting line: "When Americans hunger for selfless love and are fed only the love of self, they will remain hungry, and too often hungry people just come back for more of the same."

What if we re-read our time and place through the lens of the gospel? What if instead of riding on the coattails of current cultural movements that give us relevance in the

short term, we were actually patient and, yes, pious and disciplined enough to read events and perceived challenges with baptized reason in the light of the gospel? How would we begin to do that?

A FORM FOR IMAGINATIVE FORMATION

With the coming back of John Calvin to Geneva in 1542, he proposed *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, which laid out governance and oversight of the churches in Geneva and the surrounding district. The consistory (from which we get presbyteries) and the company of pastors are what he proposed.

The consistory was a mixed body—elders and clergy that oversaw the morality of the people in the city. Elders were elected from regions of the city and watched over neighbourhoods and helped resolve disputes; if they couldn't do it individually they brought the matter to the consistory as a whole.

The company of pastors met Friday mornings at 7 a.m., and it existed to oversee the doctrine and fellowship of the church at Geneva. All urban ministers and the teachers of the church were expected to attend (and those in outlying areas when they could). When this group met as 'congregation' it was really a forum for the continuing education of the clergy, although many others also came. Very often one minister or teacher would lecture/preach on a passage from the Bible and discussion would follow. It was continuing education in the interpretation and application of Holy Scripture under the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

The fellowship of pastors helped to check fanciful interpretation. Preachers learned to read their own lives and their world through the lens of the gospel with the help of their friends. The company of pastors was about proficiency in preaching and spiritual formation; but it was also an exercise in holy friendship where each helped the other in lives pleasing to God. When Calvin was dying, he called for his friends in the company of pastors.

The Presbyterian Church (USA), I discovered just recently, is moving to rehabilitate the venerable company of pastors. Too often we leave this aside for the overwhelming administrative functions of presbytery—for us too often it's just presbytery as consistory; but listen to the rationale for the rehabilitation of the company of pastors in the PC(USA) and ask, does it make sense for us to try and make a similar retrieval?

"Pastoral ministry is essentially a corporate, rather than an individual calling. This conviction lies at the heart of Reformed pastoral identity, and was exhibited in Calvin's venerable company of pastors, a direct antecedent of our presbyteries. Calvin convened the pastors of Geneva

weekly to study an assigned biblical text, hear a paper from one of the pastors, pray together, consider together the obstacles and opportunities facing the witness of the gospel in their region, and to determine how best to address the pastoral challenges presented by those obstacles and opportunities."

And then it concludes, "In our time, presbyteries are so often consumed with the urgency of putting out pastoral wildfires and with the constitutional mandates of regulating pastoral ministry that careful, intentional nurture of good ministry (sound biblical interpretation) gets short shrift."

That sounds pretty accurate to me. What if we began to think again of the venerable company of preachers, learning from each other in ministry?

I am just dying to one day say after a presbytery meeting, "Wow! Now that was inspiring." I'm not being cynical; I recognize the need to do business and that administrative work is crucial. But what if our business was framed by more intentional learning and spiritual support and imagination formation as it was in Geneva?

Mutual encouragement and love sustains us. And how much more confident, in the very best sense, would we be in the pulpit and behind the lectern, if we made ourselves responsible to each other for what we preach and how we teach? A danger of the ministerial life is how many of its functions are carried out in relative isolation without much accountability and encouragement.

A FORMED IMAGINATION AT WORK

I*Engaging Biblical Authority*, Serene Jones, president of Union Theological Seminary in New York City, offers an essay—*Inhabiting Scripture, Dreaming Bible*—on biblical authority that delightfully escapes abstraction. She writes about her own formation in the world of the Bible. The role that the Bible played and still plays in helping her to locate where in the world she is, and how to construe her neighbours and the needs of the world.

"In the ongoing play of my imagination, there is a strong tendency for me to impose on everything I experience some sort of story about sin and redemption. It becomes instinctual, this habit of mental organization. Wearing the eyeglasses of faith, I experience life as constantly following a narrative arc, wherein a problem is identified (something is wrong) and its solution is promised and sometimes delivered (salvation happens) ... In the midst of all of life, Jesus is constantly being born, living, confronting sin, being nailed to the cross, and resurrected to life eternal with God."

She speaks about neighbours and how she imagines them as one shaped by the story of salvation: "I cannot look at anyone without seeing Jesus loving him or her ... It is impossible

for me to frame humanity in any other way than as Jesus-loved—this is my gut response to people ... We are all constantly walking with Jesus, friend or foe. He walks beside us, healing, teaching, challenging, provoking and comforting.

"When I think about the deep habits of mind shaped in me by the scriptural story, I realize that I have learned to glance continually at the border of any story to make sure nothing is excluded from it, and, if it is, to try to pull it into the main frame. I constantly see Jesus looking up at Zacchaeus in the tree or toward lepers living in caves outside the city walls ... Call it a penchant for the marginal, a habit of mind that moves toward the edge of what we normally see in search of what we do not ..."

Jones goes on to describe how her imaginative formation by the scriptural story through childhood and adult catechesis has made her suspicious of exclusions, of consumptive market capitalism, open to the surprising intrusions of God and delighted at life in a divinely enchanted world full of playful possibility.

I'm worried as a Presbyterian minister and a teacher of the church that we don't do this much anymore. I worry that often we don't seem to have the capacity to do this anymore. I sometimes think that in the church, marketing is having its way with us, as though the only way to talk about church is given by the frame it provides. I worry that we talk way too much about sex and conflict and not enough about baptism and Christian formation. I think that we're way too fussed about reasonable order and not fired by imaginative ardour. I'm anxious that we get co-opted too often in the Christianity and culture relationship because we don't have the resources to work this relationship critically from our side. "Accommodation is us." I am mindful of Jeffrey Stout's criticism of much of modern theology: it gives the impression that it doesn't have anything to say that an atheist doesn't already know.

I think that we'll become interesting to our time and place again when, by means of biblically imaginative misreading of our times, we have something distinct and odd to say to the world. As Flannery O'Connor once said, "You will know the truth, and the truth shall make you odd."

READING THE WORLD WITH NEW EYES

Recently, I drove out to Castlegar, B.C. My son attends Selkirk College, where he's studying wildlife and fisheries management. I drove there alone. We loaded up the car and drove back together through the mountains.

As we were driving along, the whole way back, he was my interpreter. On the way there, I saw trees, mountainsides without trees and various flowers and shrubs and animals. On the way back, he kept telling me the Latin names for the trees. I learned that the Ponderosa Pine—the layperson's

name for the tree—has bark that is fire retardant. He told me that ungulates don't like corridors; and that the angiosperms are blooming.

Wow! I thought. He's experiencing the world in more subtle ways now. He inhabits the world differently. He can see what I cannot see. When you move from learning concepts and words to interpreting the world by means of those concepts and words, you've been gifted with an educated imagination. I stand in awe of what his instructors have accomplished.

What if we did that at church? What if we so educated the imagination that any baptized and professing Christian could interpret the world with growing subtlety and richness and truth? What if imagination was so stoked with scripture that the Spirit could get Christians to inhabit the world as the place where the promise-keeping God keeps covenant with the world in Christ? What if preaching and church school and sacraments and fellowship and theological education were all geared toward Spirit-enlivened imaginative training? What if instead of preferring to interpret the Christian church in a foreign idiom, we opted that language, and brought it into the captivity of the Christ-centered, scriptural narrative of reconciliation?

I think this takes Holy Spirit-inspired guts. I think some people will despise your efforts. I am sure you will be met with the accusation, "come on, be realistic," right at the door after you preach. I am sure that someone will say, "there's no pure gospel." That's because the imagination of some of your hearers has been so taken hostage by a certain time and place that they would rather believe you are lying than that God is an agent in the world. Modernity and late modernity are hostile to divine agency. My advice: just press on. I think you will begin to offer your prayers for illumination with a new sense of dependence on God. I think if you persist you might even come to appreciate the language of conversion all over again. And I think you will be incredibly weird, as the world measures weirdness, but you will be wonderfully interesting. ■

Rev. Dr. Richard Topping is professor of studies in the Reformed tradition at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver School of Theology. This is an excerpted version of a lecture delivered to the Presbytery of Calgary on Reformed Leadership. Topping is currently editing, with Principal John Vissers, a Calvin collection of essays and he is working on a book on the role of the imagination in the Reformed tradition.



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Learn Ex

We had struggled for several years at Melville, Toronto, to persuade the adults of the congregation that Christian education is for them as well as for their children. Special learning events were arranged for adults at the hour of 10, while the children were in classes. The expectation was that both children and adults would remain present for worship at 11. At times with special speakers, attendance reached as many as 30 or 40 at the Christian education event, but there were only four or five families who were regulars.

For this reason, it seemed wise to give up on this idea. Part of our concern which led to a change was seeing so many of the youth and children leaving for home after their church school classes, meeting their parents coming to worship. Studies have demonstrated that if children and youth do not attend worship at that age, they are unlikely to attend as adults. Why do most Christian education specialists seem to ignore the educational value of regular Sunday worship for both children and adults? Other obvious needs for change included a decline in church school and worship attendance. This led to scheduling church school at the same hour as that of worship, but with a difference.

In worship we aimed toward simplicity without sacrificing integrity; informality (including variety, spontaneity and humour) without giving up on dignity; and in music, the inclusion of both new and old. It was somewhere between the formal liturgy common at the time in the Anglican Church and the freewheeling informal chumminess with the deity of the other extreme. As it turned out, a good number of persons whose church experience had been limited to one or the other of these two styles of worship had dropped out, but found with us something more balanced and meaningful.

Our service began with the choir walking in amidst the buzz of friendly conversation, and before being seated, singing a short introit of praise to God, which brought order to the assembly. The first part of the service with children present was planned to engage them to some degree. Following the first hymn all joined in a printed prayer of adoration and confession on the bulletin, and the Lord's Prayer. A lay-

person, sometimes a church school pupil, read one of the scripture lessons. The word "children" to describe any part of the service was discontinued. Their story time became the "illustrated word," either as an object lesson or drawing on the screen, using the overhead projector. The scripture reading was listed in the bulletin as "the written word" and the sermon, "the proclaimed word." The children were not invited to the front for their talk, partly because Melville, without a chancel, has so little space. Upon leaving the pulpit in our small sanctuary, the worship leader is immediately among the congregation, talking directly to them, including the children. This also avoids the issue of embarrassment, which may arise for children about the age of 11 or 12, at being included with those of kindergarten age at the front of the sanctuary. Any sense of talking down to the children was avoided as much as possible. Two children along with two adults received the offerings, including those of the Sunday school in separate envelopes. Our aim was to have the first act of worship be as multi-generational as possible.

Children were also involved in the worship by inviting those who play instruments at school to bring and play them during the congregational singing on special occasions. From time to time, one of the elders and I accompanied a hymn of praise with our trumpets. At least once per quarter, an intergenerational service was scheduled, from which only the kindergarten age left for class work. These services included a variety of types of music and communication with stories, some illustrated, as indicated above. Instead of a traditional sermon, the message was usually in

ning from perience

A PASTOR'S MEMOIRS. BY WALLY WHYTE

two or three parts, including interviews and object lessons.

These changes toward an intergenerational form of worship, followed by a time for class work for the children was so well accepted that within the first year our seating was almost filled, which led to another major change. Beginning after Thanksgiving the next year, two morning hours of worship at 9:30 and 11 were scheduled on a trial basis until Christmas. According to Lyle Schaller's research, consideration should be given to arranging two hours of worship when 80 per cent of the seating is regularly occupied. The primary reason is to provide a more hospitable and comfortable setting for newcomers. At this level of attendance, families may be divided in order to find seating and some strangers are inclined to feel uncomfortable in a crowded enclosed space. Some of our families reported that at least once during the previous year they had arrived late one Sunday to find that the only parking was on the street. And at the prospect of walking in late and probably sitting in the front row, they chose to return home! Most people like to have choices! This includes seating location and hours of worship. Two different hours of worship provides three choices rather than the previous two of attending at the given hour or staying at home.

Scheduling worship at two morning hours called for decisions on two significant issues. At which service would the choir be present and at what hour would church school classes meet? The former was resolved almost immediately. The choir surprisingly volunteered to be present at both services, on the condition that their anthem would be

presented early enough at the second service to enable them to leave before the sermon. This decision of the choir is an example of the spirit of cooperation and good will within the congregation about what was happening.

The role of the organist and choir leader, who had recently joined us, had much to do with this spirit of working together as a team and the growth which was to follow. Like our youth leader who had been with us for many years, she too had a British Baptist background. Baptists make good Presbyterians!

The hour of church school was also easily resolved. Each family with children of church school age were contacted by telephone to determine which hour they preferred. Amazingly over 80 per cent preferred the 9:30 hour. Thus, from the beginning, the first service was the preferred hour of worship! Surprisingly, a good number of seniors also chose the early service. Special information from the pulpit and on the Sunday bulletin accompanied these changes on a continuing basis for the benefit of first time attendees. It was simply a matter of communication with everyone as much as possible about the whats and whys of everything. Congregational surveys were taken at times to gain opinions and preferences related to church programs.

A healthy and possibly disturbing exercise is to imagine yourself as a person with little or no church background, possibly a recent immigrant, who attends your church for the first time. How much of the service, including some of the hymns, would seem to be in a foreign language (archaic English)? Is the service so structured and led that only those ➤

Insiders often mistakenly assume that theirs is a friendly church, because they are very friendly among themselves

familiar with it can participate comfortably? Are strangers likely to leave confused and with a feeling that they have crashed a private party? There are simple ways of dealing with such concerns with a little imagination, when recognized for what they are.

One Communion Sunday we were a few minutes late ending the 9:30 service. When I looked out the front door, there was a traffic jam in the church driveway stretching out in both directions on Old Kingston Road. The second service people who had come early could not park until those at the first service began to leave! This situation produced two different reactions; some were irritated at the confusion and delay, which was soon cleared up, while others were pleased and even excited to be in the unusual situation of a church traffic jam!

Hospitality cannot be overestimated as a factor for congregational growth. A time for greeting one another in the worship agenda is often a mere formality and is likely to accomplish little to make first time visitors feel welcome. The irony is that the insiders often mistakenly assume that theirs is a friendly church, because they are very friendly among themselves. Too often the very existence of a friendship circle, which holds its members in, shuts others out! There may be unintentional indifference to strangers which they sense and interpret as lack of friendliness.

There are inside circles, outside circles and many small overlapping circles. Studies on this subject have revealed that persons who do not engage in a short friendly meeting with one or more persons or couples by the end of their second or third visit, are not likely to return. In the opinion of the American Bishop, T. Garrott Benjamin, "More important than the number of people who come to hear the preacher speak on Sunday mornings is the number of people who speak to one another when the worship ends." Studies also indicate that those who become part of a group as small as a half dozen are likely to feel that they belong to the whole. Thus the more circles of interest there are in a congregation, the better. Their size in numbers is of little relevance.

A woman of the congregation was employed as part-time director of adult education and congregational fellowship. She met the qualifications for such a position as defined by Lyle Schaller. He had learned from research related to high school education that the best prospects for part-time church leadership is not another "witchdoctor" (his word) but "empty nest" mothers. This, because they usually "have learned to be flexible and how to get along with people." (If only all pastors had these skills!) Our choice was obvious, a mother of four who had long-term association with the congregation and had recently retired from teaching. In less than two years she organized

three groups to meet three obvious needs and opportunities, each with a major socializing dimension, enabling newcomers to gain a sense of belonging.

Time Out is a 90-minute program one morning per week for mothers and their preschool aged children, with free child care provided. A meeting for seniors was organized to meet once per month in the afternoons, as was a monthly evening fellowship for women of all ages. All three groups were arranged with a built in self-perpetuating organizational structure. The leadership responsibilities revolve voluntarily among those who attend regularly, thereby requiring a minimum of bureaucracy—no professional church leaders required—no presidents, secretaries or meeting minutes as such! Professional church leaders are as inclined to organize such groups as to be dependent upon them.

Our leadership assistant also helped organize short-term study groups with some built in leadership training and arranged several regular bus outings each year, usually to see a musical or drama with lunch or dinner included. Sometimes it was a bus tour of several days. Mainly seniors of the congregation and their friends patronized these. Some of the latter, upon discovering that church people can be quite hospitable and good company, began to attend worship. The short study groups later evolved into special interest events on such subjects as parenting of different age groups of children, listening skills, photography, discovering personal gifts and denominational history, along with the more regular meetings for training elders, church membership, and Bible study. Short-term studies are more likely to attract first timers because of the normal desire to avoid long-term commitments of this nature.

Preaching assistance was also initiated by a provision in the budget for a monthly guest preacher. This left me with time, one week each month, for tasks other than sermon preparation. Some guest preachers were representatives of missions supported by the congregation. Others were noted for their preaching ability, such as Dr. Kenneth McMillan, a former general secretary of the Canadian Bible Society. When Rev. Jim Dickey, then-editor of the *Presbyterian Record*, and his family belonged to the congregation, he frequently filled this position. When he accepted a call to Stratford, Ont., a student from Knox College, Toronto, was employed for a year to fill this roll, and the next year it was a Knox doctoral student. He and his wife and family were with us as their home church for several years, almost to the time of my retirement. ■

This is an excerpt of Rev. Wally Whyte's autobiography, Wally's Story—A Pastor's Memoirs: Learning from Experience.

Under Construction

THE NEVER DONE CHURCH. BY HERB GALE



Herb Gale and his wife, Shirley.

On Nov. 21, I had the happy task of presiding over the dedication of the new retreat house that is under construction at Crieff Hills. The following is an excerpt of the words I spoke on that occasion.

As we gather together this afternoon to dedicate this new retreat house, The Crieff Inn, I am reminded of the account of the Israelites crossing the Jordan River as they entered the Promised Land. As the story is told in Joshua 4, when the priests who were carrying the ark stepped into the river, the waters from upstream stopped flowing and the people were able to cross the river on dry ground. After everyone had crossed over, Joshua ordered one man from each of the 12 tribes of Israel to go back into the riverbed and choose one stone each and bring it back to their camp. There they stacked the 12 stones to form a large pile. "In the future," Joshua said, "when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the Ark of the Covenant when we crossed over the Jordan. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."

What do these stones mean? The most obvious thing they say to the larger church and the surrounding community is that Crieff Hills is under construction. And I would suggest to you, to use Martha Stewart's favourite phrase, "that's a good thing." For the church at its best and at its truest is always under construction. The church is not meant to be static and unchanging. Like a

living plant—or to use Peter's metaphor, a living temple made of living stones (1 Peter 2)—the church is meant to be always growing, always changing. As soon as the church stands still and stops changing and growing, it ceases to be the true church of Jesus Christ.

I remember visiting a friend's cottage. He was a handyman who always had a project going and was always dreaming about the next project

"NEVER DONE."
ANYONE WHO HAS
EVER OWNED A
COTTAGE COULD TELL
YOU THAT'S A GREAT
NAME FOR A COTTAGE

to start on. After he gave me a tour of his cottage, showing me what he had done and still planned to do, I asked him if he had given his cottage a name. "Oh yes," he said as he pointed to a sign hanging over the door: "Never Done." Anyone who has ever owned a cottage could tell you that's a great name for a cottage. Well, I would submit that it's not a bad name for a retreat centre or a church either. What do you think? "Never Done Presbyterian Church! God's not finished with us yet!"

What do these stones mean? They tell us and the world that the vision first planted in Col. Maclean's mind when he decided to bequeath this land to the Presbyterian Church more than 60 years ago is still growing and developing. They

tell us that Crieff Hills and the PCC are still "under construction." And what I want to declare to you today is that if we are true to what it means to be church, we will always be under construction. Reformed and always reforming. Never Done Presbyterian Church.

Why, we could name this new addition the Never Done Inn! Hmm ... The more I think about it, that's not a bad name. I'm reminded of Paul's words to the church in Corinth, which itself was very much a work in progress:

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; ... Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. (2 Corinthians 4:8-9,16)

God's not finished with us yet. We're part of the Never Done Presbyterian Church and through God's grace we're Never Done In! Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. ■

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving for the PCC. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca



Knox, Neepawa, Man.

What do you get when you join forgotten fabric, a willed legacy, a quilter's skill, and a mission mind? A great story and a great mission! You can glimpse the latter here: The quilt guild and friends of Knox made 32 quilts for Anishinabe Place of Hope, part of Winnipeg Inner City Mission. Pictured are executive director, Rev. Margaret Mullin with Anishinabe residents. On our website you'll find a great story of Fortrel and friendship.



Presbytery of West Toronto

Proposed by Rev. Joshua Kang last year, the Presbytery of West Toronto had their second annual picnic to which all members and their families were welcome. Here's part of the report: "We ate like kings ... the space included a roofed place for tables and plenty of room to play cricket and even a small pond with geese." More photos online.



Kings Church, New Minas, N.S.

Kings Church recently welcomed 20 new members. In 2010 the congregation also celebrated the 20th anniversary of its founding and the 10th anniversary of the construction of their new building. Pictured with some of these new members are Rev. Tim Archibald (*far left*) and Barry MacDonald, clerk of session (*far right*).

Haney, Maple Ridge, B.C.

Haney welcomed Rev. Paddy Eastwood as their new minister of family and youth ministry. The congregation is excited to have her and her family—her husband Larry, and children Janet, Laura, and James—join the congregational family.

St. Andrew's, Thompson, Man.

The congregation of St. Andrew's had their first ever Friendship Sunday on Oct. 31. Everyone was encouraged to bring friends and neighbours to share in the Sunday service. There was a wonderful turnout. Afterwards a great dinner was enjoyed by all. Pictured with Rev. Sean Kim are the participants from this special day. —Joan Moses



Beaches, Toronto

On All Saints' Day, the congregation of Beaches rededicated their newly restored cross. The cross was erected and dedicated in 1988 under the leadership of Rev. Drew Strickland and was designed by artist Henk Melles. The cross was painted white this fall (the liturgical colour of resurrection). Pictured here are some of the congregation with their minister, Rev. Matthew McKay.

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Thank you. —Editor

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**PFEFFER, REV. KATHLEEN (KATE)
ELIZABETH, B.A., M.Div., D.Min.** Aug.
25, 2010, in her 65th year in Victoria,
B.C. Former program director, Knox,
Burlington, Ont., and retired minister,
New St. Andrew's Church, Dover,
Ont., and Valetta. She is survived
by her daughter, Jessica Robin (Jesse
Skulmoski), grandson, Jasper Robin
and her brother, Patrick Hagey. ■

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WITHIN THE LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, through the Life and Mission Agency, is inviting applications for the executive position of Associate Secretary, Canadian Ministries/The Vine at the national office in Toronto. The Associate Secretary will actively assist congregations and presbyteries in finding and using human, on-line, printed and financial resources to enhance the mission and ministry of all constituencies of our denomination. A complete position description is available on the webpage at www.presbyterian.ca



Applications should be submitted to: The General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency
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The deadline for receiving applications is TUESDAY, MARCH 1ST, 2011

Called to Wonder

Called to Wonder is 10 years old this month!

celebrate!

Erin and Jennifer would like your suggestions.

They would love to hear
your ideas for
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What would you like
to talk about?

Would you like to talk
about school?

Bullying? Friendship?

Loss of Friendship?

Homework? Teachers?

Parents? Divorce?

Brothers and Sisters?

Would you like to discuss
Good and Evil and
what they mean?

Write Erin and
Jennifer a letter!

Deadline for ideas:
March 31st, 2011

Parents and Sunday school
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What are your ideas for Called to Wonder topics?

Dear Erin and Jennifer,

I would really like you to write about:

child's name and age, or adult's name and age(s) of
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Later in 2011, the Called to Wonder website and blog!

Send your ideas to PRMail@presbyterian.ca, or mail this page to Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M3C 1J7

Humanity may well go the way of the dinosaur as a result. That is a pretty impressive climax for a Greek tragedy about the dangers of human arrogance towards creation

For the Journey, continued from page 50

deaths due to coyote attacks in North America, there are numerous records of coyote attacks that ended in serious injury.

I share this not to engender any ill will towards the little coyote. In fact, truth be told, I am rather fond of the little guy. Besides, coyotes are just doing what coyotes do best, which is yodel at the moon and hunt in packs. But every time I see the cute little coyote, personally I am confronted with the fact that as humans we are not at the top of the food chain like we always like to think we are. Many people in general, and many Christians in particular, seem to have adopted an arrogant attitude toward creation, thinking it is our created and God-given right to subdue it and rule over it just like the Bible says in Genesis 1 and Psalm 8. This has got to mean that we are at the top of the old food chain, doesn't it? It's right there in the word of God, isn't it? As to creation we rule—right?

After numerous interesting personal encounters with the likes of coyotes, wolves, cougars and bears, I can attest to the fact that it just ain't so. Genesis 1 isn't the last word on this; I have to read all the way up to Genesis 3:17-19 to get the rest of the story. Due to little things called human greed and sin, the Creator kicked our cute collective kiesters out of the garden and placed us in subjection to all creation. Now who rules?

It turns out that Coyote, master predator that he is, has a curriculum for me—a theological and ecological curriculum: I am not at the top of the food chain and neither am I the master of creation. Whatever else is the point of the second part of the creation story in Genesis, it is at least a convincing testimony that my status with regards to creation is not one of

dominion and domination but one of being a subject and a citizen; fellow citizen with the likes of Coyote.

As a citizen of creation I have to adjust my arrogant attitude towards creation to one of humility. I have to adjust my domineering practices in creation to one of cooperating with my fellow citizens. And if I don't, the truth of the matter is, I won't survive.

The history of Presbyterian theology is quite a revelation for me as it applies to creation and the environment. As I have read around our denomination's history, I have discovered that our theology, in fact the theology of much of western Protestantism, is more shaped by the humanist philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment than by the Holy Scriptures and the theological roots of the Reformation. The likes of Presbyterian minister and philosopher, Francis Hutchinson helped people of his society dig within themselves to find the good and become good citizens for the greater good of society. He was followed by a whole string of protégés that fundamentally influenced not only church and theology, but art, politics, economy and industry.

With the help of another Scot thinker, Adam Smith, this school of thought was exported across the western world and became the philosophical and theological foundation for western capitalism. It was a philosophy that sounded good but it was also a philosophy that denied what the word of God tries to teach about the fall of humanity. The fall of humanity was not taken seriously. People were considered innately good, therefore still able to be the image of God in creation and the good stewards of creation that God intended. Hmm ... fatally flawed human beings viewing themselves as eternally perfect agents

of God in all of creation. It seems to me you can't get a better recipe for arrogance towards creation than that.

Three hundred or so years of further history have proven how dangerously flawed the semi-Pelagian philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment really was. It provided a smoke-screen for human greed and sin to work under in western capitalism, which has resulted in a progressive environmental situation that may well end up being the greatest ecological disaster since the Chicxulub asteroid smacked the Yucatan Peninsula 65 million years ago. Humanity may well go the way of the dinosaur as a result. That is a pretty impressive climax for a Greek tragedy about the dangers of human arrogance towards creation. The trouble is, it's not just a play and the players still rage on.

My friend the coyote puts me back in my place with regards to creation. He requires that I begin to read my Bible with my eyes wide open in nature so that my theology is informed both by the scriptures and natural history. I think it was Karl Barth three-quarters of a century ago who used to say to his students that they should do their theology with their Bibles in one hand and their newspapers in the other. In this age, this age of rapid and alarming environmental degradation, it's more a matter of a coyote curriculum: doing our theology with one eye on our Bibles and the other eye on creation. ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



Coyote Curriculum

ONE EYE ON THE BIBLE, THE OTHER ON CREATION BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

“WHAT ON EARTH is that coyote trying to prove?” Linda said.

I wandered into the living room and scanned the January ice on the lake. About 200 metres offshore, a rather large coyote was sitting on its haunches staring intently towards our neighbour’s house. It was ogling Shiloh, the neighbour’s dog. Shiloh, half German shepherd and almost twice the size of the coyote, was barking insanely at it.

“Believe it or not, that coyote is trying to invite Shiloh out to lunch,” I said.

“Very funny,” Linda said. “How could that coyote take Shiloh down when she is less than half her size?” Linda said. “Besides, the coyote looks so cute and innocent, like she is just wanting a little canine companionship.”

“Believe me,” I said, “that coyote already has all the canine companionship she **wants**. I guarantee that over on

the island, somewhere in the fir trees, the rest of the pack is just waiting for Shiloh to start to chase our coyote. If she does, Shiloh will be swarmed and fricasseed just as sure as last Sunday’s rabbit.”

But the coyote looks so innocent. But the coyote is so small. But the coyote is so cute and cuddly. I have heard it all. The reality is that the little coyote is a predator; and predators that hunt in packs are extremely efficient killers. Not only can they take rabbits and squirrels efficiently, but they can take a 200-pound mule deer and a 500-pound elk just as well. Our local ranchers will tell you they can even do a number on a cow. Coyotes are predators, and like all predators they do what predators do best: they kill things.

The amazing thing with the cute little coyote is that it can prey on humans, too. Although in recent times there are only two recorded human

continued on page 49

Knox, Stratford, Ont.

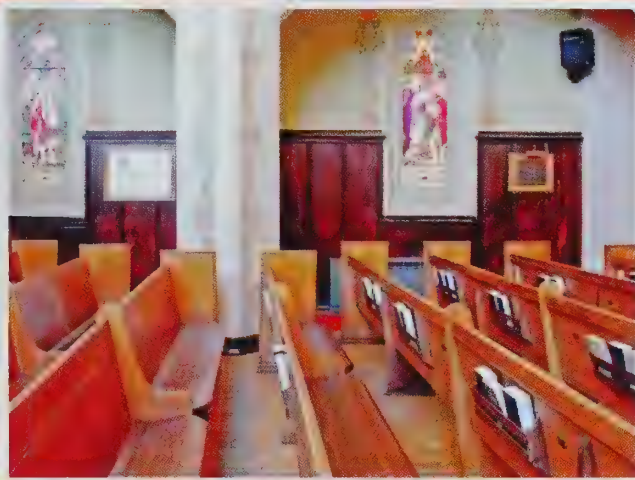
BY THOMAS DRAKE PHOTOS BY TIM JACOBS

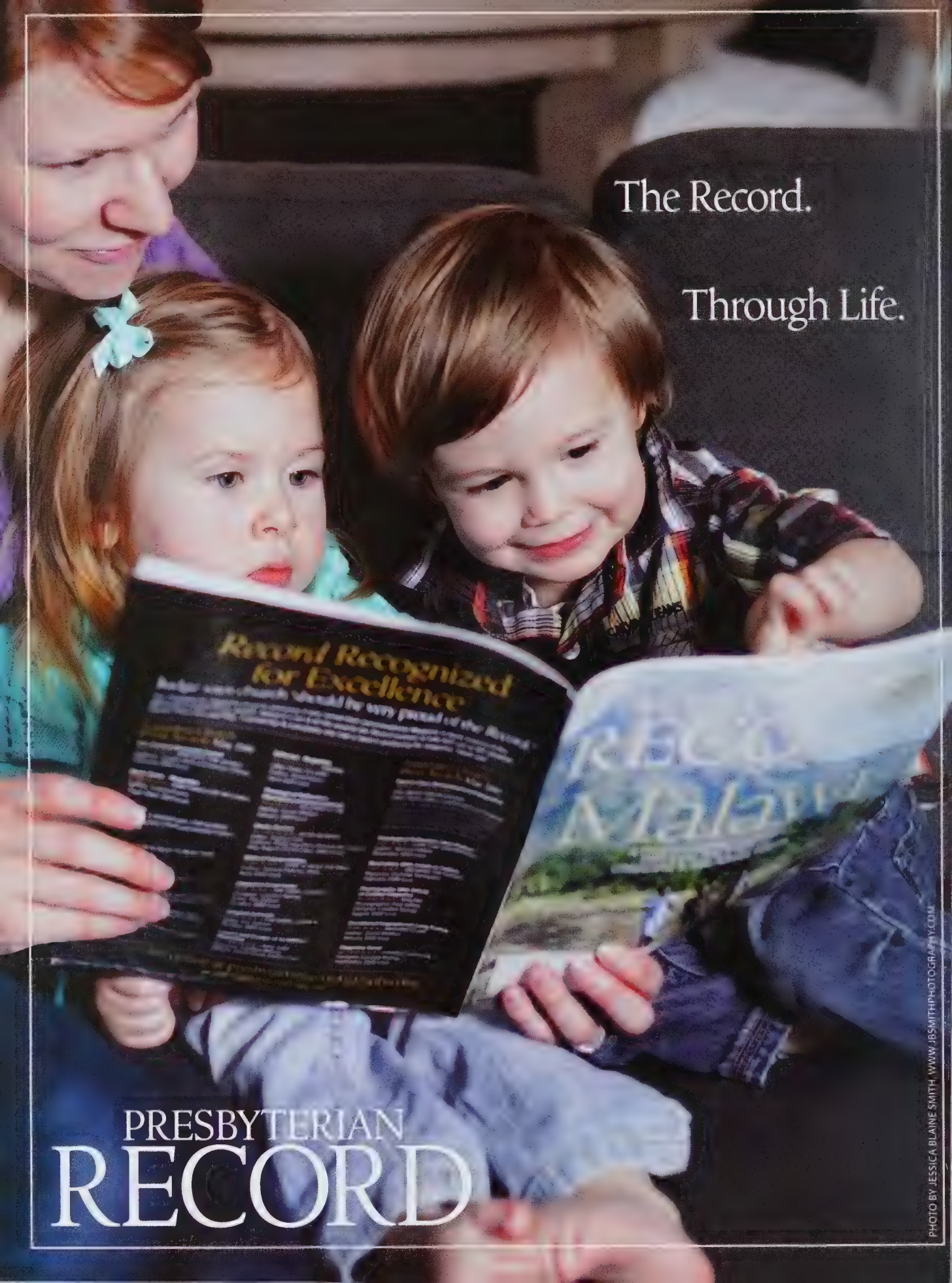
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN Church in Stratford is a local landmark situated in the downtown core.

The current sanctuary was completed after a disastrous fire in 1913. Half of the original building was destroyed and the fire resulted in the death of the fire chief and a police officer.

The reconstructed building is an anomaly in the Reformed tradition of "plain" architecture; the interior is both majestic and ornate.

Knox has the largest collection of stained glass windows in Ontario, depicting biblical stories. Complimenting this is a magnificent pipe organ complete with trumpets. Along with the main sanctuary, there is a unique amphitheatre which serves a vibrant Sunday school. Elegant banquet facilities are used by the Stratford Chefs School and numerous community groups.



A photograph of a woman with reddish-brown hair and a purple top leaning over two young children, a girl and a boy, who are sitting on a couch and reading a magazine together. The girl has blonde hair with a light blue bow and is looking intently at the magazine. The boy has brown hair and is smiling while looking at the magazine. The magazine is open, showing a dark left page with the headline 'Recent Recognized for Excellence' and a right page with a landscape photo and the title 'RECO Malawi'.

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PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

FEBRUARY 2011



A MAN AND HIS FAITH

JOHN CONGRAM AND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHINA



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IS CONVERSATION,
WE MOST FULLY HONOUR
AND GIVE GLORY TO GOD

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by Jessica Blaine Smith



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The Church of R&R

ALWAYS CHANGING, ALWAYS GROWING, ALWAYS REFLECTING GOD'S LOVE. **BY DAVID HARRIS**

Okay, so you're wondering just what Presbyterian church I visited that prompted the headline, The Church of R&R. Rest and relaxation? In a Presbyterian congregation??

Now, I suppose there's a good argument to be made for church having such a component (after all, the Sabbath is a day of rest ...), but it's not what I had in mind. Rather, I was thinking of the Reformed and Reforming church.

It recently occurred to me that there is no major denomination called the Reforming Church. The broad group of churches the Presbyterian Church in Canada belongs to is the World Communion of Reformed Churches, not Reforming Churches.

Why is this, I wonder? Because the (admittedly unofficial) motto of this communion is: "The church reformed and always being reformed according to God's word." The common shorthand is: The church, reformed and reforming.

The point, I think, is that the church is always being changed as the Spirit continues to reveal the truth of God's love. This is Jesus' promise to his disciples, a promise that we have inherited.

The problem, if I can put it this way, with simply using the word reformed, is that it gives the impression that nothing needs to change, or worse, that nothing should change.

But if we believe in the power of the Spirit leading us into all truth, we have to be open to change. That change can be new, such as getting rid of the old belief in slavery or it can be a restoration of the old, such as the Protestant church getting rid of the relative novelty of indulgences in the 15th century.



If we believe in the power of the Spirit leading us into all truth, we have to be open to change

All this rests on what we call theology, the study of God.

Theology is often seen (often rightly but regrettably) as the preserve of professors and seminarians. I've heard more than one seminarian say they have no intention of teaching theology because it doesn't have any relevance.

As former *Record* editor John Congram notes, with his usual perceptiveness, in an interview in this issue, the concern is right. "My sense is that younger people are less interested in the question, 'Is it true?' than they are in the question, 'Is it relevant?'"

But, as our Theology 101 writers also wisely note in this issue, sidelining theological discussion is misguided.

"Theology is absolutely essential for Christians," points out Prof. Pamela McCarroll. "As human creatures with the gift of thought and language, it is our particular calling to offer the gift of our thought and language to our faith."

In other words, theology is dynamic. It's not about endlessly repeating dusty doctrines, but discovering how to explain the dynamic relevance of the

divine in the world.

And nowhere is that dynamism more evident than at St. Andrew's, Sutton. A small congregation, they offer a huge ministry of outreach in their community, presenting the face of a caring Jesus to those in need.

Or, as Laurence DeWolfe says in this month's Progressive Lectionary: "The Incarnation ... reveals how God chooses to work in this world. God's holiness doesn't mean distance from us and our world."

Our hope at the *Record* is that you, our readers, will engage with what you read about the dynamic and always reforming church that constantly emerges in our stories. You can write us or post your comments on our website. Your engagement is all part of the Spirit-led re-forming of all of us as we grow in the love of Christ.

Or, as John Congram puts it: "We may wish that it was otherwise but all of our relatives in the church, including some who disagree with us and others we don't like, must be in on the process of discerning God's will for our lives."

Reformed and reforming.

Finally, I want to draw your attention to our pages for the youngest of our readers. Called to Wonder is now 10 years old! And Erin and Jennifer want to know what ideas you'd like them to discuss in the future. We're also planning to expand this ministry online, so please share your ideas with them.

Called to Wonder is proof that theology can be fun—and relevant! ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO. 2, FEBRUARY 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

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ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634
Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.
Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of
Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF)
for our publishing activities.

Subscription rates. GST/HST not included.

Every Home Plan: \$19.50

Individual: \$28

U.S.A. and foreign: \$38 **Single copies:** \$3.95

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by
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Address all correspondence and changes of address
(include label from magazine) to:

Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Phone: (416) 441-1111; 1-800-619-7301

Fax: (416) 441-2825

E-mail: circulation@presbyterianrecord.ca

Web site: www.presbyterianrecord.ca

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Magazines
Canada

A Glimpse of the Lord's Love

Re This Is My Beloved Son, December

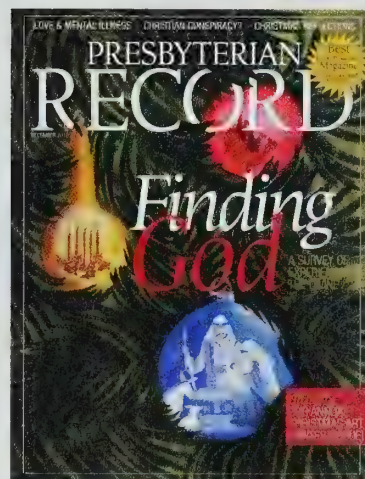
This article took me back to 1993 when I was diagnosed as bipolar, and the years of personal therapy, support systems, many reports, meetings and suffering on my part. Today I am doing well and still have therapy and support systems in place. My Presbyterian church has been one of my many supports. They gave me rides to church, were kind and accepted me as a person with a disability, and our gentle pastor and an elder came to visit me and took me out to lunch as well as gifting me with holy books for my reading.

I loved the last paragraph, "Yes, our son...is our beloved son and we have learned that our love for him is only a taste, a glimpse of our Lord's love for us and all His children."

MARION DA SILVA,
MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

I wish to thank you on behalf of myself and my wife for this article. We read it through the eyes and heart of our own experiences as people living with a serious and persistent mental illness. The writer wrote a very poignant, succinct, and informative description of the effect of mental illness on both

Letters



write to us

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the lives of the family and the sufferer. There is nothing we can add to this letter except to say that both my wife and I have found an accepting spiritual home in our church family that helps us fill the void left from years of emptiness and loss.

RON AND GAIL NICHOL,
ONLINE COMMENT

Thank you to the author of this article and thank you for publishing it.

BRENDA KERSLAKE THOMPSON
BAYFIELD, ONT. ➤

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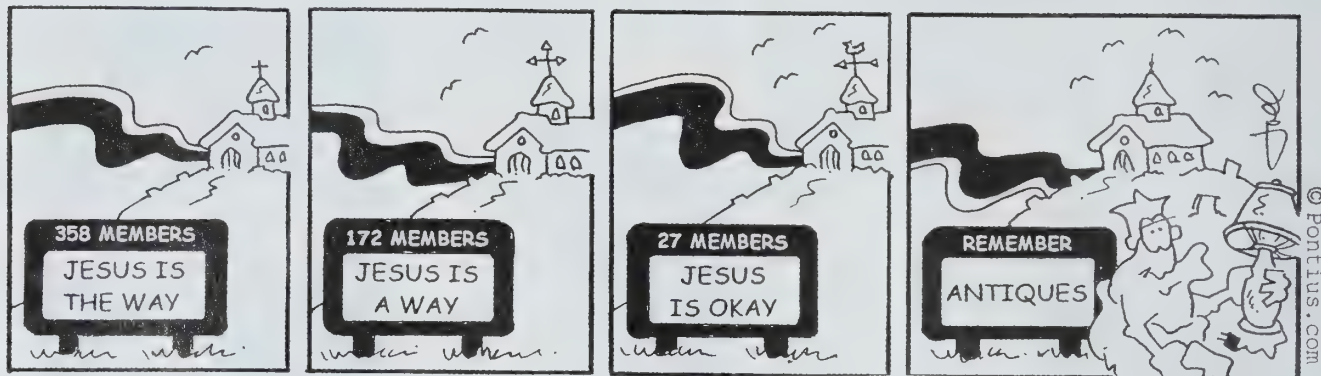
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Pontius' Puddle



Beyond Cutbacks

Re A Shift in the Wind, December

In response to Hans Kouwenberg's concern that with cutbacks there will be fewer "boots on the ground" to support local churches and presbyteries, I wonder if the national

office has considered selling its building and land? The land could be redeveloped to include condos and office space for the national office or offices could be rented elsewhere in the city. The money saved could be used for ministry and mission.

Another possibility is to use space in several of our larger local churches across the country. This decentralized, less corporate model would support local churches and place national staff closer to the reality of those in the pews. Does Knox College have extra usable space? With modern technology, communication amongst the different branches of the church could be maintained.

Some of these possibilities may have been considered already, but if not, perhaps they should be. Many local churches are reconfiguring themselves for ministry in the 21st century, so maybe our church needs to think beyond cutbacks and consider more radical changes to the national office.

JUDY WOOTTEN, TORONTO

Creative Communication

Re What Does Vital, Faithful Worship Cost? In Song, Jan. 5

This is a good topic for discussion. I think that breathing new life into our worship is all about renewing how we communicate in worship. Our culture will only respond to a 'language'

it understands—excellent creative communication. If we can convey our profound, life-changing content in a meaningful way, we can reach 21st-century Canadians.

GORD MCCROSTIE, ONLINE COMMENT

Grey is the New Blonde

Re More Grey Hair in Pews, December News

You realize, of course, much of it has been there all along, masquerading as blonde, brunette and red heads.

JOAN MCKAY, PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.

Year-long Campaign

In 1989, the House of Commons adopted a resolution to eliminate child poverty by 2000. It has not eliminated poverty and in some cases, it has gotten worse. In 1980, the first food bank was opened as a temporary measure to help the poor. There are now over 600 of them in Canada.

Christmas gift and food drives make the giver feel good for one or two months of the year.

If you really want to help, give to your favourite Christmas campaign(s) as your effort for one month.

Then, in January, ask your Member of Parliament what she is doing.

In February, ask your Member of Provincial Parliament what he's doing.

In March, ask your municipal councillor what she is doing.

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In April, ask your MP what she has done.

In May, ask your MPP what he has done.

In June, ask your municipal councillor what she has done.

Repeat these steps in September, October and November.

RON DANCEY, OSHAWA, ONT.

A Great Story

Re Good News Stories, November

It was good to read the Good News Stories. Have you heard Cannington's story? They had a beautiful brick church with stained glass windows and lovely woodwork.

In October 2007, a youth deliberately set it on fire. They forgave him, but such a shame, such a shock. They re-invested the insurance money. They needed time to think and pray for God's guidance. They decided it would be best to join Beaverton and help them build their new church.

On Oct. 3, 2010, they invited presbytery, Beaverton, and others to come to their empty church lot for a service. Then they went to the old stone church at Beaverton for a communion and dedication service.

Cannington is a church that has suffered a great loss. I feel they are doing well to be generous. I think it would be nice to give them some recognition.

KATHLEEN LYONS, LINDSAY, ONT.

Editor responds: We agree completely, and that's why we've featured the newly amalgamated congregation on page 14 of our News section.

It's All About People

Re Am I Just I, December

What a wonderful story. The church is not the building but the people, the family of God. When Jesus said, "I will build my church," it was about people and not a building. It was about people whom he called to be in

a close relationship with him and with one another. Jesus is there where two or three are gathered in his name; this can be anywhere.

FREDDY HEYNSSENS, ONLINE COMMENT

Ode to Christ:

Payment in Advance and in Full

I use Christ's name in vain,
I have displayed in the worst way and
everything I've done requires
redemption

from Him,
the One,

In advance of all the sins,
I'm afraid,

I'll have committed in life;
when I'll fade into the hereafter,
I will have none of the stains of sin
that the devil's spun,
Since Christ, for all that I've done,
will have paid.

Thus, knowing that I'll blaspheme Him,
have laid against Him
(though I do not my Lord shun)

My most foul of thoughts,
it has been conveyed to me
that I need Him,
the Father's Son,
To pay for me with His blood as He
prayed to Heaven, which gave
Him nowhere to run.

FRANK G. STERLE, JR.

WHITE ROCK, B.C.

Correction:

*Re Moderator Visits Museum,
December News*

Rev. Angus Sutherland is not convener of the Committee on History (a title that belongs to Rev. Don MacLeod), but chair of the Advisory Committee for the National Presbyterian Museum. ■

online extra

AS ALWAYS, LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED SO MORE VOICES CAN BE SHARED. THE COMPLETE TEXT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT **PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA**.



Evangel Hall Mission

Urgently Needed Items for Winter

Clothing Items:

Winter coats, new socks and underwear for both men and women. T-shirts, long underwear, running shoes for men and women. Winter boots for men and women and blue jeans, blankets and sleeping bags.

Personal Necessities:

Shampoo and conditioner, disposable razors, deodorant, sunscreen, feminine products, lip balms, toothpaste and toothbrushes, individual packages of tissues, hairbrushes and combs.

Food and Kitchen Items:

Canned fruits and vegetables, canned salmon and tuna, canned meats, canned baked beans, Kraft dinner, dried pasta and sauce, rice, peanut butter and ceramic coffee mugs.

Miscellaneous:

Canadian Tire Money, school supplies and art supplies, TTC tokens—adult, seniors and students.

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Ask Me About My Church

A CHALLENGE TO EVANGELIZE. BY ANDREW FAIZ AND KIRK MACLEOD

Over the 900 metres from my front door to my daughter's school, I see a lot of handbills on hydro posts. There are the usual themes, of course, lost dogs and cats, piano and guitar lessons. This past summer I noticed something different: appeals to spiritual quests. Learn more about Eastern Spirituality or Buddhist teachings or Yoga. "Isn't that interesting," I thought. "Churches should do that!"

Well, I merely thunk it; Rev. Kirk MacLeod of Keswick, Ont., has actually done something about it. I hand this column over to MacLeod as he challenges the rest of us to evangelize:

"Imagine doing something that could unite all Christian churches in your community. Imagine having your neighbour spark a conversation about faith. These things could happen if you join with one community in Ontario this coming Easter.

"Keswick Presbyterian is inviting Presbyterian Churches across Canada and even further to be part of what we are calling the 'Ask Me About My Church Campaign.' It's simple, really. It begins with one church approaching all other Christian churches in their community and inviting them to participate in this new outreach. Don't move ahead without at least 80 per cent of the churches on board because this is about 'Kingdom building' and not 'kingdom building.'

"Here's how it works: At three crucial times in the life of the church—Christmas, Easter and that sacred time of year known as Fall Kickoff, churches are invited to purchase signs (available on our website) from a local printer

ASK ME
about
MY CHURCH

IMAGINE DOING
SOMETHING
THAT COULD
UNITE ALL CHRISTIAN
CHURCHES IN YOUR
COMMUNITY

(the organizing church could coordinate this) and place the signs on their front yard for about three weeks.

"Imagine going down your street and knowing that you are not the only Christian in your neighbourhood, let alone on your street. Or imagine your neighbour is going through a crisis and needs a 'sign' that they are not alone.

"All these things could happen if only one church takes the initiative in their community. We've done it in Keswick! Seven of the nine churches came on board for our Christmas dates. Two churches were not adverse but simply had a wait and see attitude. I'm optimistic that the two holdouts will join us for Easter (put your sign up the week before Palm Sunday and remove the Sunday after Easter) and that even the communities that surround us will take part. Maybe you can

motivate your church to get on board. If you are looking for more information go to askmeaboutmychurch.com or follow us on Facebook and YouTube (key words: ask me about my church). We would love to hear your good news stories and for you to read about what happened to us over Christmas.

"One last imagine? I imagine driving through my own community this Easter season and seeing even more 'Ask Me About My Church' signs. As I head south to the next community I see more signs and then the next community even more signs. I see signs stretching from coast to coast to coast.

"I even see signs that read, 'Ask Me About My Church' in other parts of the world. Maybe it's a dream or maybe it's one small way we can see God bless His church, the entire church. For a denomination that has been declining for years—or to use a Natural Church Development term, a church that often lacks passionate spirituality—we need to be bold and courageous and we need to let the world and our neighbours know that we love our church because there we grow in faith in Christ and belong to a family where we are welcomed and loved."

So, there you are. A challenge to give to your neighbours something they desperately need: a personal relationship with Christ. Or, to use another campaign slogan that rightly should belong in the church: Let's just do it.

For the next two months, till Easter, this column will belong to Rev. MacLeod to lead us in helping our neighbours. ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.



HAITI one year later

On Jan. 12, Haiti marked one year since a devastating earthquake demolished the country. A hurricane and cholera outbreak caused more destruction. Aid work is ongoing thanks in part to Presbyterians who donated \$1.6 million to Presbyterian World Service and Development. Through its partners, PWS&D has been able to provide transitional housing, food, clean water, health care, seeds, tools, schools, income generating initiatives, and psycho-social and art therapy programs.

Minister Censured

DAI EXCOMMUNICATED; CHARGES AGAINST CHURCH DISMISSED. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

IN A RARE DECISION, the church's highest court has excommunicated a minister, declaring that he cannot be a member of the church or function as a minister until he repents of "his numerous offences" and is formally restored to the denomination.

Peikang Dai, a Chinese-born minister, received the church's harshest censure after several years of battling the Presbyterian Church on issues of authority and submis-

sion to presbytery and other courts and making unfounded allegations of racism against the church and several individual clergy.

The decision was rendered by a special commission—a tribunal acting on behalf of and with the authority of General Assembly—after hearings in December, 2010. The decision cannot be appealed.

"It was a very difficult decision that the commission had to make,

bringing the best possible solution to a very difficult issue," said Rev. Wally Hong, convener of the commission which was appointed by the 2010 General Assembly. Hong's commission was tasked with reviewing Dai's appeal of a decision in 2009, where a synod commission found Dai guilty of conduct unbecoming of a minister, and deposed him, stripping him of his status as a minister of word and sacrament in the Presbyterian Church. ➤

A TIMELINE OF PEIKANG DAI'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1989—Dai comes to Canada from China. He finds a welcoming community at Knox, Spadina. Shortly after, he begins a mission outreach to Chinese immigrants in downtown Toronto.

1995—He studies at Knox College, graduating in 1998, and is ordained the same year.

1998—Dai returns to China as a missionary with the Amity Foundation, supported by the PCC. Returns to Canada in 2003.

May 2005—Dai submits a petition to East Toronto Presbytery to have his Mandarin ministry established as a congregation. Presbytery endorses the proposal in principle, but asks Dai to work further on the budget.

May 2005—Dai submits a formal complaint to presbytery, claiming racial discrimination regarding his Mandarin ministry, and against him personally. Dai told the *Record* he submitted all the information that was required of him. Presbytery sends Dai's letter to synod.

Oct. 2005—Synod appoints a special commission to investigate the complaint. Rev. Daniel Cho is convener.

Sept. 2006—Synod commission finds Dai's claims to be without merit.

Jan. 2007—Dai submits a complaint to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), citing racial discrimination by the church as a whole, and by some individuals. Concurrently, according to Rev. Tim Purvis, he begins flooding presbytery with accusatory emails numbering at least 1,000, and copies them to secular media and international Christian organizations. His presence at presbytery becomes more and more disruptive.

Sept. 2008—Frustrated by Dai's disruptive behaviour and disregard for the church's procedures, Purvis

files a complaint against Dai with the presbytery.

Presbytery sends the complaint to synod. Synod appoints a special commission to investigate, headed by Rev. Sean Foster.

June 2009—HRTO issues an interim decision reminding Dai of his 21-day deadline for filing a complete application, and ordering Dai to immediately stop copying his emails to the tribunal.

July 2009—Dai fails to appear for the synod trial. A second date is scheduled for August. The trial proceeds.

Sept. 2009—The synod commission finds Dai guilty on all three charges; Dai is deposed as minister and suspended from membership of any PCC congregation for five years.

Oct. 2009—Dai appeals the synod decision to General Assembly.

April 2010—HRTO issues an interim decision dismissing all of Dai's allegations regarding discrimination related to the Mandarin ministry proposal.

June 2010—General Assembly orders a special commission, convened by Rev. Wally Hong, to investigate Dai's appeal.

Dec. 7, 2010—HRTO dismisses all remaining allegations.

Dec. 15, 2010—GA commission denies Dai's appeal, and calls for excommunication.

Dec. 2010—Dai emails church staff, and others, noting his gratitude to the church for its efforts, yet calling for it to "acknowledge the racial exclusion of mainland Chinese and to challenge the racism directly and publicly in its final judgment." He also submits an application to have his Shenzou ministry received as a congregation of the PCC. ■—AM

'I will persevere and will be persistent to see systemic discrimination addressed in our denomination'—Dai

The GA commission "respectfully disagrees" with the lower court's sentence, saying it had erred in applying deposition, which is only for heresy and gross moral misconduct, and stated that excommunication was the only proper censure available in the circumstances.

"The job of the commission was not only to look after the interest of the gospel and the church as a whole, but to protect the appellant's interest as well," stressed Hong. "The purpose of adjudicating is not necessarily to punish, but to bring all parties to a state of forgiveness and reconciliation."

Dai was removed from the church for engaging "in a consistent pattern of refusing to submit to the lawful oversight of the courts of the Presbyterian Church in Canada," following "a consistent pattern of divisive and disruptive conduct unbecoming a minister of word and sacrament."

"The appellant's actions showed him to be impenitent and contemptuously resistant to correcting his actions and attitudes," the commission said. "As a result, the special commission sadly concluded that the only correct censure for Mr. Dai is excommunication, the denomination's highest censure ... The censure, which casts Mr. Dai out of the communion of the church, is imposed with the prayer that Mr. Dai will repent of his ways, and that restoration will yet follow."

"He labours under utter torture and arrogance," said Rev. Daniel Cho, convener of the synod commission that dealt with Dai's first complaint of racism. "All along the way, the church has been patient and kind, and has given him the fullest degree of pastoral care ... But all

along, he has shown an utter disrespect to people and the courts, and that was deeply offensive to us ... [The church] has been open to listening to him again and again, and he hasn't made his case to us, to synod, to presbytery and even to the human rights tribunal.

"It's not about racism. It's about him. And he refuses to acknowledge it."

Dai filed several complaints of racial discrimination against various branches and members of the Presbyterian Church with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

All charges have been dismissed. (See timeline on pg. 10.)

"It's really tragic," said Rev. Tim Purvis, minister at Westview, Toronto, and the one who laid formal complaints against Dai with the Presbytery of East Toronto. "So many people have tried to work reasonably and be pastoral in dealing with Mr. Dai, but he has resisted every effort. This was a last resort because we tried everything else."

"I still hope this will be resolved through the international Christian community," Dai told the *Record*. "But

if it is not resolved, it will force me to go back to the human rights tribunal. I will persevere, and will be persistent to see systemic discrimination addressed in our denomination."

"We always up and pray that the end result of any discipline within the church will be reconciliation and ultimately a return to the church family and the restoration to wholeness of the Body of Christ," said Rev. Stephen Kendall, the church's principal clerk. ■

Amy MacLachlan is the *Record's*

Hope for the Church

MODERATOR NOMINEES FOCUS ON REVITALIZING CONGREGATIONS, BEING CHURCH.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

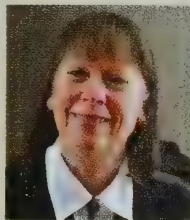
FOUR MINISTERS have been nominated for moderator of the church's 137th General Assembly. Ballots were sent to presbyteries in December, and the votes will be tallied April 1. Assembly will begin June 5 in London, Ont.

Rev. Iona MacLean didn't expect to find her calling among small congregations. As a minister's daughter, she grew up in the bustle of Halifax. But after becoming the first woman ordained in the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces, she took her professionally-trained voice and love of worship to smaller churches, eventually following that calling to her current charge at First, Pictou, N.S., in 1992.

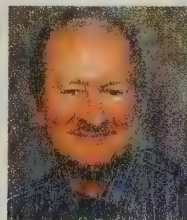
"I have an affinity for what small groups have accomplished, and how the Spirit can still move in us," she said. "I think small is beautiful in many ways. But we need to encourage people to realize that it's so because so often it's the bottom line that's really governing what's done, rather than imagination."

"I think one of the things we're

2011 Moderator Nominees



Rev. Iona MacLean



Rev. Dr. Rick Horst



Rev. Thomas Kay



Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams

really struggling with in the church is a lack of hope, which is related to a failure of generosity, and I think those affect us at all levels ... If we're discouraged and we see no way out, then there is no way out. But if we're a people of hope and we trust that the future is in God's hands, then that energizes us to do more than we can imagine."

MacLean has served on numerous committees, including the International Affairs Committee where last year she completed a four-year stint as convener, and the 1997 *Book of Praise* task force. She has been moderator of three presbyteries and the Synod of the

Atlantic Provinces, and served on the senate of Knox College, Toronto. She also loves singing with a local group, the PresbySingers, and participates in annual musical productions sponsored by the Pictou Rotary Club.

Rev. Dr. Rick Horst describes himself as a congregational pastor and a strategic planner. During 17 years in St. Mary's, Ont., and six years in his current charge at St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont., he has worked to encourage revitalization and spiritual relationships. In particular, he draws from Kennon Callahan's *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*; Horst was ➤

a contributing editor to the 2010 edition of the book, and has led many congregational and presbytery workshops aimed at being more intentional in ministries.

"For me, congregations are the lifeblood of the church," he said. "I see the church as strong, small congregations. We can emphasize doing better what we do best, and don't have to try to do everything. Megachurches don't speak to a lot of people. ... It's about relationship building and training people in congregations to do pastoral care for each other, day to day. That's what I responded to more than 30 years ago when I felt God's call to work in a congregation: to help people use their gifts intentionally and missionally. Not for survival, but for mission beyond themselves. To be relational with people. That's fundamental to me."

Horst has served on numerous committees including Assembly Council, the restructuring team in

charge of the 1991 and 1992 reorganization of national offices, and the Canada Ministries advisory team. He is currently vice-chairman of the board of Barrie's Royal Victoria Hospital, and a chaplain to two veteran's associations. He is also an unabashed fan of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats and one of the PCC's few motorcycle-riding ministers.

Rev. Thomas Kay may have been born and educated in Scotland, but he has ministered exclusively in Canada. Following some successful appointments in northern Ontario during his student days at the University of St. Andrew's, he was invited to return after graduation. Kay was ordained on Prince Edward Island, and has since served charges in P.E.I., Dartmouth, N.S., Leamington, Toronto, and Guelph, Ont. He currently ministers at MacNab Street, Hamilton, Ont. He was also nominated for moderator in 2008.

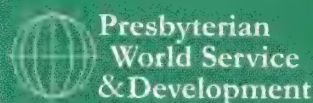
"I've always been passionate about educational ministries at all levels, but I find I'm more and more concerned with—and focused on—the local congregation as the bedrock of the church, and with the building up and the vitality of local congregations where mission and ministry happen," he said. "I really think we have to rethink how we do church as a national church and what the national church exists for ... If we could have a national conversation and a lot of local conversations that would be a major step forward in helping us figure out our future."

Kay has been clerk for two presbyteries and moderator of four, has served on the fund for ministerial assistance and theological education committees, and four times on the General Assembly's committee on business. He has also been involved in church and community activities everywhere he has lived, the most recent of which is

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Hamilton's Out of the Cold program, which is hosted by his church twice a week during the winter.

Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams was a trained nurse pursuing a theological education when God pushed her into new territory. In 1984, the palliative care nurse volunteered for a six-month stint working in pediatrics with a church partner in Nicaragua. The experience exposed her to the plight of refugees and changed the course of her life. In 1989 she was ordained to a position working with refugees, and she has served as executive director of Action Réfugiés Montreal, an ecumenical ministry with the Anglican Diocese of Montreal, since its founding in 1994.

"I have a passion for where the church engages and addresses the suffering in our world, and how we find Christ in that," she said. "It's about the human condition and what it means to be human, and how God lives within that and how we, as people, live within that. I find it's about finding hope and giving hope."

When asked about the church's future, Williams repeated Jesus' words: "'Fear not, for I am with you.' ... The church has always survived and it has always changed. I don't know what the church will be in the future. It doesn't make sense to be anxious about it—but to be what the church should be."

Williams co-authored two 2010 study guides: *Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World* and *Welcoming Refugee Friends to Canada*. She has served as interim moderator at several charges, was a member and chair of the Presbyterian World Service and Development committee during the 1990s, and worked for two years as part-time refugee coordinator for PWS&D. She also spent the spring of 2007 in Syria working with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. She attends St. Columba by the Lake, Pointe Claire. ■

Community News



Oh, Happy Day The congregation at Kortright, Guelph, Ont., had a faith-filled one-Sunday offering that netted more than \$76,000 for Habitat for Humanity. Diane Nelson (left), executive director of Habitat's Wellington County chapter, accepted the cheque. Clerk of session David Rekker, session member Irene Light, and Rev. Alex MacLeod were on hand during the presentation.

Kortright Raises Thousands in One Offering

IN A SPECIAL SUNDAY TITHE, the congregation at Kortright, Guelph, Ont., raised \$76,000 in one morning for their local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. The offering was in response to the \$760,000 given to them by the federal government as a grant for building renovations, completed last summer.

Diane Nelson, executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Wellington County, visited Kortright last fall to receive the cheque, and to talk about Habitat's work in the community.

"It was remarkable that a small congregation on one Sunday contributed 10 per cent of the gift amount

received," Nelson told the *Record*. "Remarkable, but not surprising as this is what God promises when we are faithful."

The donation will be used to fund the building of a home in Guelph, and Kortright will participate in its construction. As per Habitat's policy, 10 per cent of the donation will be sent to an affiliate in a developing country.

Session clerk, David Rekker said session started discussing what its response to the grant ("a miraculous gift from God") should be as soon as the gift was announced.

"Two of the values at Kortright include tithing and missions, so it was decided that our response ►



Evangel Hall a "Top Pick" For the third year in a row, Evangel Hall Mission was recommended by Charity Intelligence Canada as one of its "top picks." Executive director Joseph Taylor (left) attended the awards gala, with EHM board member Abel Pandey (right).

EHM provides a range of services for homeless and vulnerable persons, from emergency food, clothing and shelter to long-term housing solutions and guidance, as well as a free dental clinic that served about 450 clients in 2009.

Charity Intelligence, itself a registered charity since 2008, evaluates charitable organizations and recommends those that, in its judgement, best use donations to achieve results. Of 82 charities analyzed in depth in 2010, 36 were recommended. Analyses of the recommended charities are published in a red booklet, available online at charityintelligence.ca. ■ —C.Purvis

would be to raise an amount equal to 10 per cent of the grant, and donate that to a local organization with similar values and that had a construction project requiring funding," said Rekker. "Since our grant was for construction and community infrastructure, we felt it was important to maintain this theme."

Consistent with their fundraising policy, Kortright decided to raise the \$76,000 solely through free-will offerings on one Sunday last May.

To encourage the congregation, the session and their families decided how much they would contribute. From

the nine elders, more than \$14,000 was committed.

"On the day of the offering, the energy at Kortright was electric; partially because we decided to bring all 180 families together in one service, instead of the usual two," Rekker told the *Record* in an email. "As clerk, and because I was involved with both the construction project and the fundraising campaign, I was quite nervous. Yet we were somehow confident that God had shown up and that He was going to work through His people."

Rekker was in the pulpit on the day of the offering, and had the pleasure of announcing the amount raised.

"I remember there was thunderous applause," he said. After the service, there was a time of celebration with members of the community, the mayor, and the local MP.

"We were all astonished that the offering almost exactly matched what we had set out to give," said Rekker. "I think there were many of us whose faith was strengthened that day as God came through in such a perfect way. It was obviously not because of our personal efforts—we had no flashy campaign; we simply believed that God's gift to us required a response." ■ —AM

UPDATE:

New Partnership, New Building, New Life

THREE YEARS AFTER a fire destroyed the 128-year-old Knox Church in Cannington, Ont., the congregation has risen from the ashes, joining with nearby Beaverton to form Beacon Presbyterian Church. The two congregations merged last June, and were officially dedicated on Oct. 3.

The new congregation will worship in a brand new building—scheduled to open this summer—measuring 12,600 square feet. The facility, which stands on the former Beaverton site, will be a community hub with a gymnasium and multi-purpose space, and is intended to attract youth in the area.

The congregation is planning on hiring a youth pastor to help meet the needs of kids and teens in the township. Currently, there are about 37 youth and kids in the congregation, and about 200 people in total.

The new building—dubbed "the church that meets your needs"—is creating buzz in both the Cannington and Beaverton communities; Rev. Barney Grace, who marked 14 years of ministry at Beaverton in November, said they have already had some visitors, and each week there is higher attendance at the Sunday service.

"As the new building is being built, the coming together [of the two congregations] is more and more cohesive," said Grace. "Before, it was just a conver-

sation, but as the roof and windows go up, there is more excitement."

Beaverton had begun talking about a new building back in 2002, but the idea was put on hold for various reasons. Cannington first approached Beaverton several months before the fire, and talks went forward to begin both the merger and construction following the disaster. In Feb. 2009, Cannington voted unanimously to amalgamate. They then distributed \$200,000 to various needy causes as a legacy of the church. Cannington's property was maintained, and will become a community park.

The new building will feature a foyer with memorabilia from both congregations, including a Bible saved from the fire at Cannington, and items that were hidden away in time capsules at each church. ■—AM

One Church, Four Ministers

ON DEC. 5, 2010, Briarwood, Beaconsfield, Que., formally installed three ministers: Revs. Harry Kuntz, John Vissers and Joseph McLelland, who joined the congregation as "ministers in association."

The role is one for ordained ministers who do not have a charge in a presbytery; it places them on the church's member role and under the care of the session. They can sit on committees or be elected as ruling elders, but remain accountable to presbytery.

Kuntz, a retired minister, Vissers, principal at Presbyterian College, and McLelland, professor emeritus, all participated in the life of Briarwood for many years. They were installed in the congregation with the approval of the session and the Presbytery of Montreal.

"They are an invaluable resource for preaching, teaching in small groups and pastoral care," said Rev. Dr. Greg Davidson, the church's minister. "In our case it has proven true—the more the merrier!"

■—C. Purvis

World News

Crisis Looms in Ivory Coast

THE MONTH-LONG political impasse in Ivory Coast is in danger of causing a humanitarian crisis as people flee across the border to Liberia and Ghana, say ACT Alliance members working in the two neighbouring countries.

Ivory Coast has been mired in a political stalemate since the results of the national elections on Nov. 28 were declared. The incumbent president, Laurent Gbagbo, has declined to concede defeat to the apparent winner, Alassane Ouattara, citing rigging in the northern region of the country where Ouattara has a wide following.

Ouattara has been recognised internationally as the new president, and leaders of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States have stated that they could use force if the incumbent does not step down.

The disputed presidential election has already taken a deadly turn. More than 170 people have been killed in the country as a direct result of the electoral stand-off, according to United Nations figures, while 14,000 people have fled to neighbouring Liberia to escape the violence that broke out in the election's aftermath. The office

Women and children have been hit disproportionately hard by the conflict

of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that, in the worst case scenario, as many as 30,000 people could become refugees.

Women and children have been hit disproportionately hard by the conflict. According to ACT Alliance's Forum in Liberia, the 14,000 who reached Liberia in December include 8,666 children below 17 years, and 3,544 women.

■—ACT Alliance

PC(USA) Member Killed in Arizona Shooting

PHYLLIS SCHNECK, a member of Northminster Presbyterian in Tucson, Arizona, was among those killed in the shootings on Jan. 8, 2011, that left six people dead and 14 injured.

Jared Loughner, 22, has been charged with trying to assassinate an Arizona congresswoman, and could face the death penalty for killing a federal judge in the process.

■—PC(USA)



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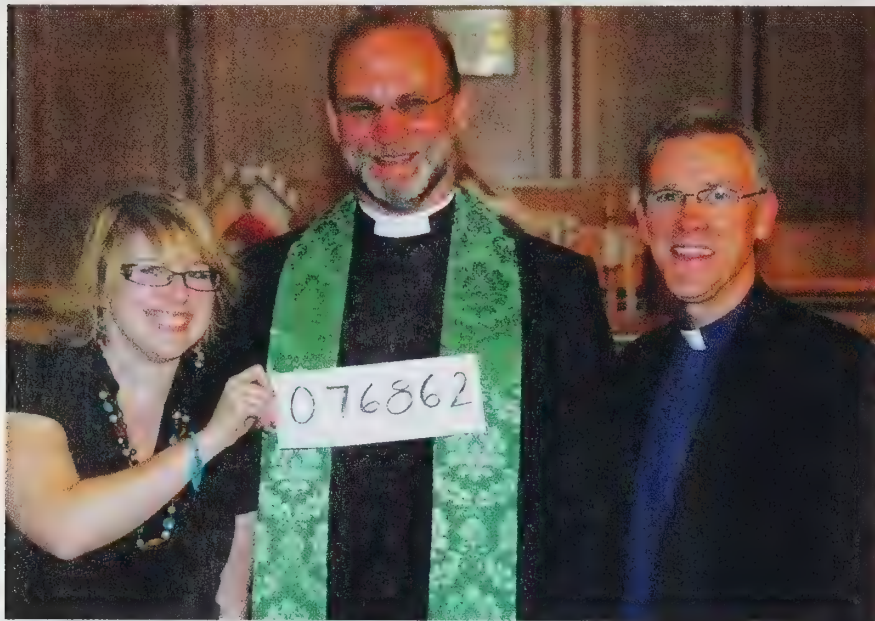
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Planting Seeds in Prison

CHAPLAINCY CAN CHANGE HEARTS. BY CONNIE PURVIS



Rev. Jacqui Foxall, Rev. Brad Shoemaker and Rev. Mike Marsden.

HEARTS CAN BE CHANGED, even in the confines of a prison cell. It was a story Rev. Brad Shoemaker shared with staff at the church's national offices during Restorative Justice Week, Nov. 14-20, 2010.

After an 18-year career in the investment industry, Shoemaker graduated from Knox College, Toronto, in 2008 and entered the cinderblock and

plexiglas world of prison chaplaincy. He serves at Maplehurst Correctional Complex, a medium to high-security prison and detention centre in Milton, Ont. Because the centre is intended for prisoners who will be staying a relatively short time—either because they are awaiting trial or because they have been sentenced to less than two years—programs and resources are limited. But

seeds of faith can still be planted.

"God is already here, my goal is to help the inmate population discern God's presence and direction in their lives," Shoemaker told the *Record* in an email. "Other than that, I get front row seats to the transformative power of Christ."

During his presentation, Shoemaker read aloud from a letter written to him by a "lifer" who had become a Christian while he awaited trial. The inmate began holding morning devotions that were attended by members of many faiths. And now, after pleading guilty, he studies the Bible and theology through a distance education program and hopes to become a minister when he is released from his life sentence.

But despite some good news stories, prison chaplaincy is not for the faint of heart. Shoemaker says he has never encountered someone he could not work with, but some prisoners make relationships difficult.

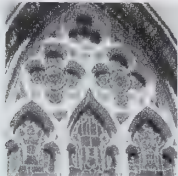
"At least 50 per cent of inmates have major mental illnesses," he said. "It's much easier to put someone in jail than in a [psychiatric] hospital. There are realities of economics and time ... It takes about \$75 a day to incarcerate someone, and \$1,000 to treat them."

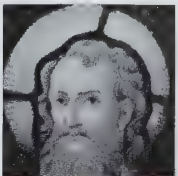
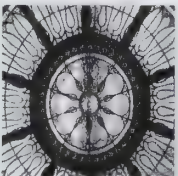
Restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm caused by a crime. Although it encompasses a range of methods and social movements, it generally aims for a balanced and peaceful approach that focuses on those most affected: victims, offenders and their communities. Shoemaker defined it as: "A cost-effective criminal justice approach that is based on reconciliation, restoration, healing and rehabilitation."

As a chaplain, Shoemaker often finds himself facing many different people and situations—from a violent

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and troubled prisoner whose three-year-old son has died to a 52-year-old who has been convicted of drunk driving and has found himself in prison for the first time.

"The inmates are not allowed to cry on the ranges (an unwritten range rule) so these tough men come in and sob,

**At least 50 per cent
of inmates have major
mental illnesses.**

**It's much easier to put
someone in jail than in
a [psychiatric] hospital**

then I help them get cleaned up and presentable, only so I can do the same thing five minutes later with their cell mate," he wrote.

As a spiritual guide and counsellor, he uses a number of psychiatric approaches and therapies, helping inmates to release anger and pain, and to distance their core identities as children of God from the mental illnesses and problems that afflict them. In addition to active listening, he uses questions like: "If Christ were to completely heal you, how would I know you are different ... what would your life look like? This helps the inmate look to the possibilities instead of the negatives that they are often stuck in," he wrote.

Even simple chapel services, which allow up to 10 inmates at a time, can be powerful. Shoemaker described his first communion service at the prison, which was drawn straight from the Presbyterian book of worship: "The expression on the faces of the inmates, none of whom had ever been inside a church or experienced communion, was reverent. This was nothing I did, but simply the transformative power of Christ in action." ■

The Other Six Days Kitschy Christianity

AND OTHER DIVERSIONS. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

VIDEO: One Punk Under God: The Prodigal Son of Jim And Tammy Faye is a six-part documentary on Jay Bakker, the self-proclaimed "outlaw preacher" and son of famed '80s televangelists, Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker. After the imprisonment of his father and an estranged relationship with his mother, Jay became an atheist and a drug addict before returning to a life in Christ. *One Punk Under God* follows the pierced and tattoo-covered Jay Bakker as he leads Revolution Church (which meets at a bar) in Phoenix, Arizona (now a multi-site). See punk-rock style evangelism from a political liberal as Jay battles personal demons and watches much of his church implode after coming out in support of gay marriage.

FIND IT @ amazon.com. Search for "One Punk Under God."

BIBLE: Experience

The Bible Experience is an audio Bible like no other. This gender-inclusive, complete Bible (Today's New International Version) is reenacted by a cast of more than 200 African-American public figures, including Cuba Gooding Jr., Blair Underwood, Angela Bassett, Samuel L. Jackson and Denzel Washington.

FIND IT @ amazon.com. Search for "The Bible Experience."

KITSCH: Testamints

Testamints are just what they sound like. Each mint is stamped with a cross imprint and individually packaged with a Bible verse written right on the wrapper. Share your faith while you share good breath!

Now available in sugar-free gum too. **FIND IT @** testamints.net

CLOTHING: A Dino-riding Jesus

That's right! Okay, okay, so this is like a double shot of kitsch and I have pitched the T-shirt company, Zazzle before for some good John Calvin products but this was just too good to pass up.

FIND IT @ Search zazzle.ca for:

"Jesus is awesome."



WEBSITE The Voice of the Martyrs

The Voice of the Martyrs is a multi-denominational not-for-profit online magazine first published in 1967. Its founder, Richard Wurmbrand began the magazine shortly after being released from a 14-year prison term in Communist Romania. His crime? Christianity. Ever since, Pastor Wurmbrand has devoted his life to giving a voice to various Christian martyrs around the world. **FIND IT @** persecution.com ■

Rev. Brad Childs is minister at First, Regina.

Letter from Pakistan

Remember Pakistan

MILLIONS STILL FACING THE EFFECTS OF FLOODING. BY ALEX MACDONALD

AFTER A WEEK in the foothills of the Karakoram Mountain range in the north of Pakistan—where winter is set to pound the millions of flood-affected people—the heat and ocean scent as I step off the plane in Karachi, the opposite end of the country, is a welcome contrast.

Karachi is the country's largest city, a sprawling financial and cultural centre for the country and the Islamic world. For me, the bustling seaport was only a fleeting image from the window of the vehicle en route to visit the countryside of Sindh Province.

The devastating floods that began in July 2010 inundated one-fifth of Pakistan, affecting some 20 million people. Here, on the floodplains of the country, many parts remain submerged: homes, belongings and crops.

After six hours of driving as straight as an arrow, we turned north and wove our way through field upon field of sugarcane, interspersed with small towns of several hundred households. The road is elevated and remained untouched by the area's bulging rivers; for a period it became home to thousands of peasants who work the land. Much of the sugarcane is brown and wilted, drowned by the floods. In some spots the crops are still in standing water, the soil unable to absorb the deluge.

"I haven't seen anything like it in 63 years," said an elderly man in the village of Mahboob Kahloro. "Some stayed in their homes and lived in the water, but most of us left before the waters covered everything. I went

to family, but many took what they could to the road."

In 1947, the fractious partition of British India led to the creation of Pakistan and in the process displaced more than 10 million people. The flooding of 2010 has caused similar confusion and displacement, clogging the roads with people who lost their homes. PWS&D partner, Church World Service—Pakistan/Afghanistan found many of the tired and hungry people of Mahboob Kahloro on these roads. With international support, they provided them with dry food rations for two months, along with cooking pans and hygiene products to tide them over until they could return home.

They waited two months for the waters to recede before returning to rebuild their destroyed mud homes, putting their children back in school and desperately planting the cracked and saturated land. In other areas of the province, many are still living in camps, waiting for the waters to recede from their communities and for a safe place to rebuild their lives.

The families of Mahboob Kahloro do not own their land, and must pay their wealthy landlord between 20 and 40 per

cent of their wheat, cotton or sugarcane harvest every year. Sharecropping dominates the floodplains while landlords lead comfortable lifestyles in Karachi, living off the profits of this feudal agrarian economy.

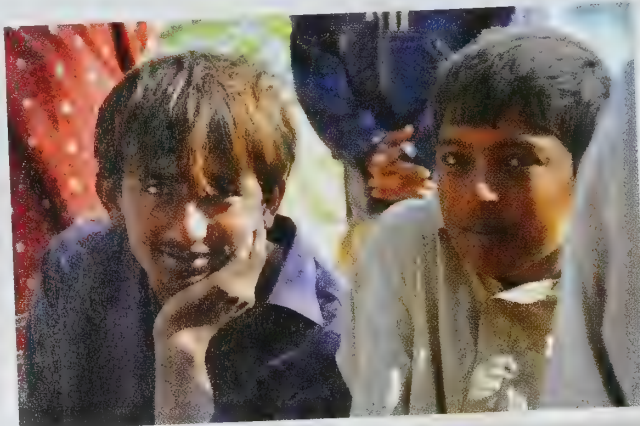
Most families lost their entire cotton crop in the floods and have taken on loans to get through this crisis. Food aid helped them avoid starvation in

the aftermath of the floods, but the race was on for these farmers to get wheat seed in the ground by the end of December. The few that have been able to get seed in the ground can only pray for a bountiful harvest.

Before bidding farewell to the people of Mahboob Kahloro, the village gathered round as my local colleagues and I removed our shoes and sat on an orange tarp to receive a deliciously sweet cup of tea and biscuits. This brief moment of sharing marks my last visit to a community in Pakistan before boarding a plane to Toronto, where a whirlwind of Christmas celebrations would likely keep the troubles of Pakistan far from most people's minds.

Thankfully, some did remember, reaching out in prayer and support. In this new year of hope, I urge us to continue our solidarity and empathy while praying for those in Pakistan who struggled through a difficult and traumatic year. ■

Alex Macdonald is a program coordinator at PWS&D, and spent two weeks in December 2010 monitoring PWS&D flood response projects in Pakistan.



Boys in Mahboob Kahloro, Pakistan.



A Communion of Voices

LISTENING TO MANY FOR THE VOICE. BY RICHARD TOPPING

I called to have a little dialogue; you know, a friendly exchange with a friend who would listen to my complaints and then agree with me. I told him about trouble I was having, hoping to incite in him a sense of outrage that I should have to endure such difficulty. He said, in a very non-conversational tone, "Richard, when Jesus said, 'take up your cross and follow me,' what made you think he didn't mean you?" Sometimes Christian dialogue goes that way.

This year, the Theology 101 series expands to create dialogue. Last year, individual writers engaged theological themes in their own voices. When you are given around 1,000 words to address a topic you quickly come to the point. Try to say what everyone thinks and suffer the worse fate of pancaking your presentation—a mile wide and an inch deep.

This year, Theology 101 has space to hear from two people on each issue we address. We will consider topics

This year, Theology 101 has space to hear from two people on each issue we address

from human sexuality to the nature and meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The format allows for more diversity and so gives a feel ►

When we work at making Christian sense of the world, we usually enter a conversation that is already long since underway

for a range of ways Presbyterians make Christian sense of our faith and the world. We hope this approach allows for the expression of the generous orthodoxy that Canadian Presbyterians inhabit—even if we stretch ‘generous’ and ‘orthodoxy’ just a little at times.

There are precedents for this way of engaging matters of concern to the church. For example, the gospels—we have four, not one. Although tempted at times to produce a *Reader's Digest* account of the life of Jesus, the church resisted. Some believe a reason the church, led by the Spirit, resisted creative editing has to do with hesitation about exercising power to silence people. The only way to get from four gospels to one seamless story is to commit violence against the way some tell the story. The late Presbyterian theologian William

Placher wrote, “The narratives of this God who eschews brute force were not edited with the brute force necessary to impose a single, clear framework” (*Narratives of a Vulnerable God*). It takes a lot more time and energy to make sense of the four accounts of the one gospel of our Lord, but the church believed it to be an enriching effort, and one that was an ingredient in Christian identity.

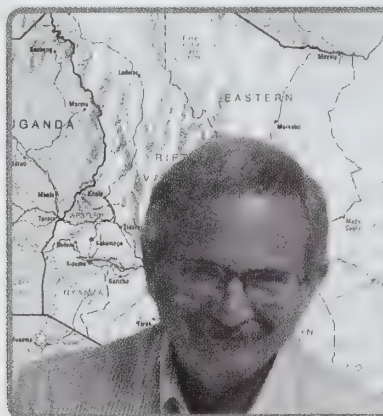
Christian thinkers of the Reformation often arranged their individual writings according to the ‘common places’ of Christian discussion. Topical organization and treatment of the great themes of Christian confession—God, the Trinity, Christ and salvation—brought a variety of voices together in common places (Latin: *Loci Communes*). Think of this as a concrete expression of the statement we make when we recite the creed—“I believe in the communion of the saints.” Authors communed with those who preceded them and they commune with us around central Christian teachings. At Christian common sites, we hear the voices of the saints who wrestled with similar matters in their time. It would be arrogant for us to believe ourselves either the first or only ones to come to these common sites.

When we work at making Christian sense of the world, we usually enter a conversation that is already long since underway. I just love John

Calvin (1509-1563) on care for the environment, Hilary of Poitiers’ (315-367) caution against ascribing gender to God, and Argula von Grumbach’s (1492-1554?) courageous letters on religious tolerance and civil disobedience. We can learn a great deal in dialogue with those who went before us. We can learn a great deal in conversation with saints around the world in this time, too.

Christians have good reason to engage in dialogue with each other. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. The Spirit comes upon us all as our inner teacher. In our patient, respectful and prayerful speaking and listening to each other, we strive to hear the voice of Christ and to follow him faithfully in this time. The Barmen Declaration of 1934, a declaration of resistance against the false voice of national socialism, reminds us: “The church lives solely because day by day, it is newly called, upheld, confronted and governed by its Lord ... The holy, Christian Church, whose only head is Christ ... abides in the same and does not listen to the voice of a stranger.” ■

Rev. Dr. Richard Topping is professor of studies in the Reformed tradition at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver School of Theology. He is also a member of the Theology 101 committee.



Rick is working with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Kenya as a community health physician. He brings a wealth of experience to his primary role of addressing the concerns of the PCEA with respect to HIV/AIDS prevention. He also functions as the acting health coordinator for the PCEA Health Board.

www.presbyterian.ca/rickallen

Dr. Allen is supported by *Presbyterians Sharing...*



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Communicating and Communing

WHEN THEOLOGY IS CONVERSATION, WE MOST FULLY HONOUR AND GIVE GLORY TO GOD.

BY PAMELA MCCARROLL

True theology is dialogue, not monologue. It is conversational and dynamic, not monolithic and static.

In our forthcoming Theology 101 series, we seek to model theology as dynamic and lively conversation between people wrestling with faith and the meaning of faithful living. This model of doing theology is invitational and seeks to call people forth into the lively conversation of faith

that has been going on for millennia. (A conversation that will continue until Christ's return!)

One of the biggest challenges with the perception of theology today is the assumption that theology is about dry, old doctrines decided by some guys who are long dead. It is as if everything has been decided and there is nothing to change or question and our job is to just give a nod or a shrug and carry on with trying to live faithfully (as if that is truly possible without theology). ➤

This model of doing theology is invitational and seeks to call people forth into the lively conversation of faith that has been going on for millennia

As human creatures with the gift of thought and language, it is our particular calling to offer the gift of our thought and language to our faith

Theology is the most impossible task of the Christian life. Yet it is the most necessary task. On the one hand, when we talk about God we are attempting to speak about the One we can never contain in human words. In the Hebrew scriptures and Jewish tradition, God's name cannot be spoken. The concern is that if humans presume to name God, or limit God in human language, we therefore presume to have control and power over God. So too with theology, if we presume that our theology is about naming, limiting and defining God's overflowing magnificence, we find ourselves caught up in idolatry. Our definitions and words about God become the idol to which we bow rather than bowing to the One who defies and unhinges our limited human perceptions and expectations.

On the other hand, theology is absolutely essential for Christians. As human creatures with the gift of thought and language, it is our particular calling to offer the gift of our thought and language to our faith. In the journey of faith we are challenged to love God with all our hearts, minds and souls. Loving God with the whole of our beings includes loving God with our minds and bringing the fullness of our thought and language to bear on

the journey of faith. Language is not only about giving voice to thought and experience, it is also about communicating and communing with others in the human family.

So how can we do this? How can we live within these seemingly conflicting realities? How do we talk of God while resisting the temptation to limit God to our finite language and thought? How can our theology reflect the humility and limit of our creaturehood, while also honouring the glorious generosity of our Creator who made us with a creative capacity for language and thought to give voice to our faith in community?

Simply put, it is when theology is conversation, dialogue, even argument that we most fully honour and give glory to God in human thought and language. It's like the conversation and dialogue among the community of faith not only reflects the immanence of God and diversity of ways God meets us and draws us, but it also points beyond itself to the transcendence of God who cannot be contained or limited by language and thought. Further, it is in the community of faith in dialogue, conversation and argument that we most fully embrace who we are, creatures made together, for

each other as the body of Christ.

When we look at the scriptures, there is no single story that can speak to the fullness of the experience of God. There are contradictions, differing experiences and points of view. There is no single voice, story or thought that can bear the height and breadth of the fullness of God's revelation of love. Instead, all the scriptures together bear witness to the diverse ways God is experienced in human life while also, together, they point beyond any one story to the One who inspires all the stories.

In our column for Theology 101 this year, we seek to reflect such diversity and dialogue. And so you will find in the column this year that every topic will be addressed by different points of view. We hope our readers will find this engaging and invitational, inspiring theological discussion and debate. We hope you will be challenged and inspired to give voice to your thoughts about God and the things of God in dialogue with others whose perspectives and experiences might be quite different. As followers of Christ, may we love God with all of our minds through theological argument and dialogue that through our many words, the divine Word may be glorified. ■

Rev. Dr. Pamela McCarroll is assistant professor of pastoral theology at Knox College, Toronto. She is also a member of the Theology 101 committee.

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The Sermon on the Mount by Carl Heinrich Bloch
(1834 – 1890), oil painting on canvas.

Holy? Perfect? How?

LIVING UP TO GOD'S PURPOSE FOR US ISN'T EASY, BUT IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
Feb. 20, 2011 reading:

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 9-18
Matthew 5: 38-48

The opening words of the Old Testament reading and the closing words of the gospel may tempt us to tackle the epistle this Sunday. God says, "Be holy, for I am holy." Jesus says, "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Holy!

Perfect! No way! It's hard enough just to get up and come to church on a Canadian February Sunday morning. If the sun's shining, it's ski weather. If it's dark, we want to stay in bed and dream of resorts in Cuba, where warm breezes and cool drinks dispel all worries about holiness or perfection.

"Holy." It conjures up images of hawk-eyed Pharisees. Levitical nit-pickers. Grim-faced, white-whiskered, tweed-suited, fence-building elders o' the kirk. Boring, silent Sundays. Missed opportunities for fun. We're quick to

see the fine line between holiness and mania. Or holiness and hypocrisy.

"Holy" is about plaster saints on high shelves and martyred missionaries in church history books. Or is it?

"Perfect." Another word that drives people to mania. Addiction. Living death. The child who cries over a mark of 98 on a test because it's not 100. The adult who lives alone because the perfect mate just can't be found.

"Perfect" is about striving for an ideal life that proves, again and again, that it can never be reached. Making peace ➤

with chronic disappointment. Or is it?

Holy means “set apart for a peculiar purpose.” We know that. Perfect means “just right, suited to a particular purpose.” Do we know that? Both mean, in the context of today’s readings, that God has something important in mind for us. It’s as simple, and as necessary, as that.

We may choose to read two of the verses the lectionary skips. Leviticus 19:3 and 4 repeat two important commandments. The following verses may not be so important. The reading picks up at verse 9, with some very important stuff that makes clear what holiness means. Being holy means being just, compassionate, respectful and consistent in all dealings with others. Being holy means saying what you mean and meaning what you say. Making peace in our families and watching out for our neighbours.

Here’s where Jesus got part two of

his greatest commandment. Holiness means loving our neighbours as if we couldn’t be who we are without them. Even in Leviticus we find a simple call to be like God by mirroring God’s lovingkindness to others. Simple, not easy. But not impossible.

What about this perfection Jesus commands? It’s not about keeping our hands clean and our noses high. It’s about getting close to people who frighten us, fight us, even hate us and want to hurt us. It’s not about looking out for number one. It’s about risking, and giving, all. Not easy. But not impossible.

Holy. Perfect. They’re both about living in ways that set us apart from most accepted norms of behaviour. Ways that suggest our purposes aren’t those of the violent, consumption-driven world. Holiness is always dangerous, whether it’s revealed in the tabernacle or lived in the marketplace. Perfection is risky. It calls for resistance

to influences that are powerful to shape us to purposes other than God’s.

What, then, is God’s purpose for us? Reading Leviticus (or parts of it) and the Sermon on the Mount (all of it!) suggests God intends us to be a distinctive, redemptive presence in the world. Through us, God intends to make God’s presence known through acts of justice and mercy.

“We become what we worship.” A simple text as old as the church, reclaimed as the title of a new book about idolatry. Another word from the early church: “He became like us, that we might become like Him.” The Incarnation is our model. It reveals how God chooses to work in this world. God’s holiness doesn’t mean distance from us and our world. God’s perfection embraces human imperfection. ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives and teaches in Halifax.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



Photo credit: David Whittaker

For nearly a century, Evangel Hall Mission, an inner-city mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, has served the poor and homeless in downtown Toronto. From its new facility at 552 Adelaide Street West, EHM is able to provide affordable housing for 130 residents, a daily drop-in centre, counselling and health support services, worship and fellowship experiences, and hot meals through its community dinner program. After volunteering at one of EHM's community dinners, Richard became a regular financial supporter of EHM. Recently he included a generous bequest for EHM in his will to ensure the EHM can continue to offer hospitality and hope for those in search of a hot meal and a warm smile.



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Prayer and Great Things!

GOD IS WITH YOU; GRAB HIS SLEEVE. **BY CALVIN BROWN**

Most Presbyterians believe in prayer but many of us don't pray well. The numbers of prayer meetings in churches are few and for the most part are not well attended. I remember the child's finger play rhyme that parodies this. 'This is the church. This is the steeple. Open the doors and look at how few people turned out to the Wednesday evening prayer meeting.'

In the church I pastor our focus is on becoming a people of prayer. We have a great deal to learn but we are on the way. We believe God can do great things in answer to prayer. As John Calvin, our church forebear put it: "Prayer is the key that unlocks the treasure chest of heaven."

But when we pray do we really expect God to respond generously or do great things? Samuel the prophet urges the people to, "Fear the Lord

and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you."

David's Psalm 106:21 urges us also saying, "They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt."

Jesus also reminds his followers of the great things they would be able to do as they looked to him in faith. John 14:12-14: "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will ►

do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name; so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

We often forget that we, as God's people, are to pray for and expect great things. Failing to do so is to have a failed faith. Someone has said that true faith is all about risk taking. I agree with that and would add that the risk taking also includes risky prayer. Authentic prayer must, of course, as the catechisms tell us, be prayer according to His will.

So we must develop the relationship that can know the heart of God and pray accordingly with expectation of fulfillment—that too seems a great risk to many. I can only say to fail to do it is an even greater risk.

It is looking to this faith commanded

by Jesus. The Renewal Fellowship is inviting the whole church to join together this year to pray in earnestness and righteousness. (James 5 tells us that the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.)

Renewal Fellowship plans to hold Presbyterian Prayer Summits across the country. What should we as Presbyterians pray for? More money, more people, more influence in our society? Perhaps, but let's start with praying for more love for God and one another, and more openness to the renewal by the Holy Spirit. Let us ask God to enable us to develop holy character and integrity that people can count on. As we enter through Jesus into the fellowship of the Holy Trinity and present ourselves as living sacrifices to him we will be shown what specifically we are to pray for, and we will see more than we ever

imagined come to pass. When we pray together the power of God is unleashed a hundredfold.

Perhaps God's desire is this—that we become a people of prayer that reflects the vision of Zechariah 8:22-23: "And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat Him. This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In those days 10 people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'" It is my prayer that this vision for God's people may become reflected in our life of prayer. ■

Calvin Brown is the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the Presbyterian Church.

For more information see the webpage renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca.

Caring for our Ministers

Ministers are one of Christ's gifts for the continual renewal of the church for ministry.

Because ministers and their families sometimes need confidential counselling, consultation and referral, the Life and Mission Agency has created a pilot **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**.

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The EAP helps ministers to strengthen themselves for Christian service and gives the church another way to express its care for the community of people who lead it.

For more information:

Rev. Susan Shaffer 1-800-619-7301 ext. 264
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website: campgeddie.ca

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CAMP MACLEOD

website: cb.pccatlantic.ca/camp.html

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website: campkannawin.ca

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British Columbia

CAMP DOUGLAS

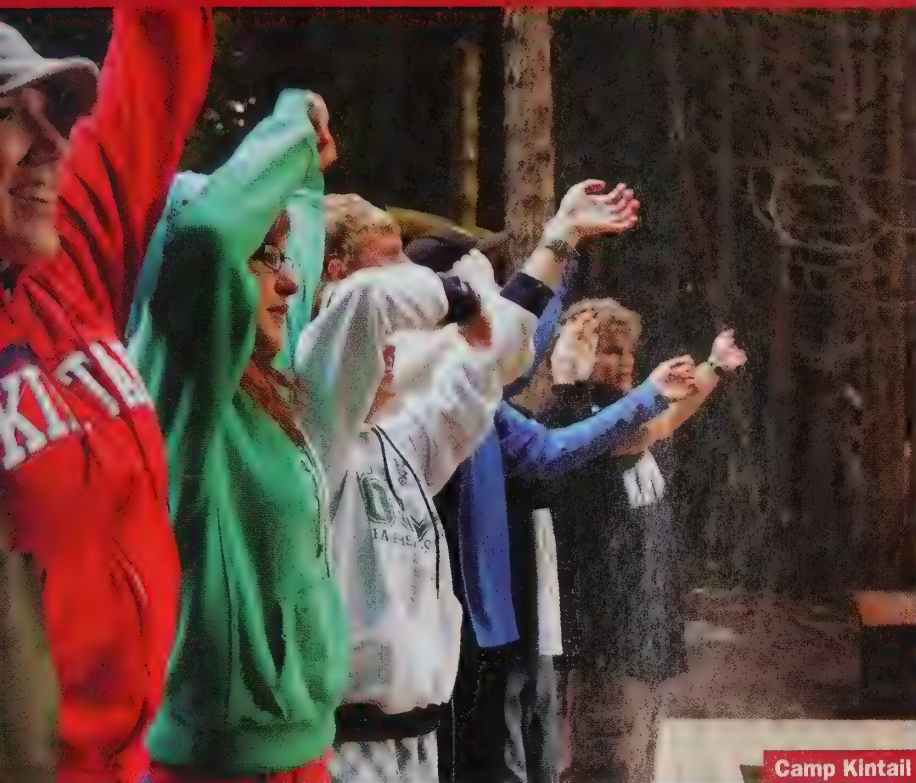
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY
JESSICA BLAINE SMITH

A MAN
AND HIS

FAITH

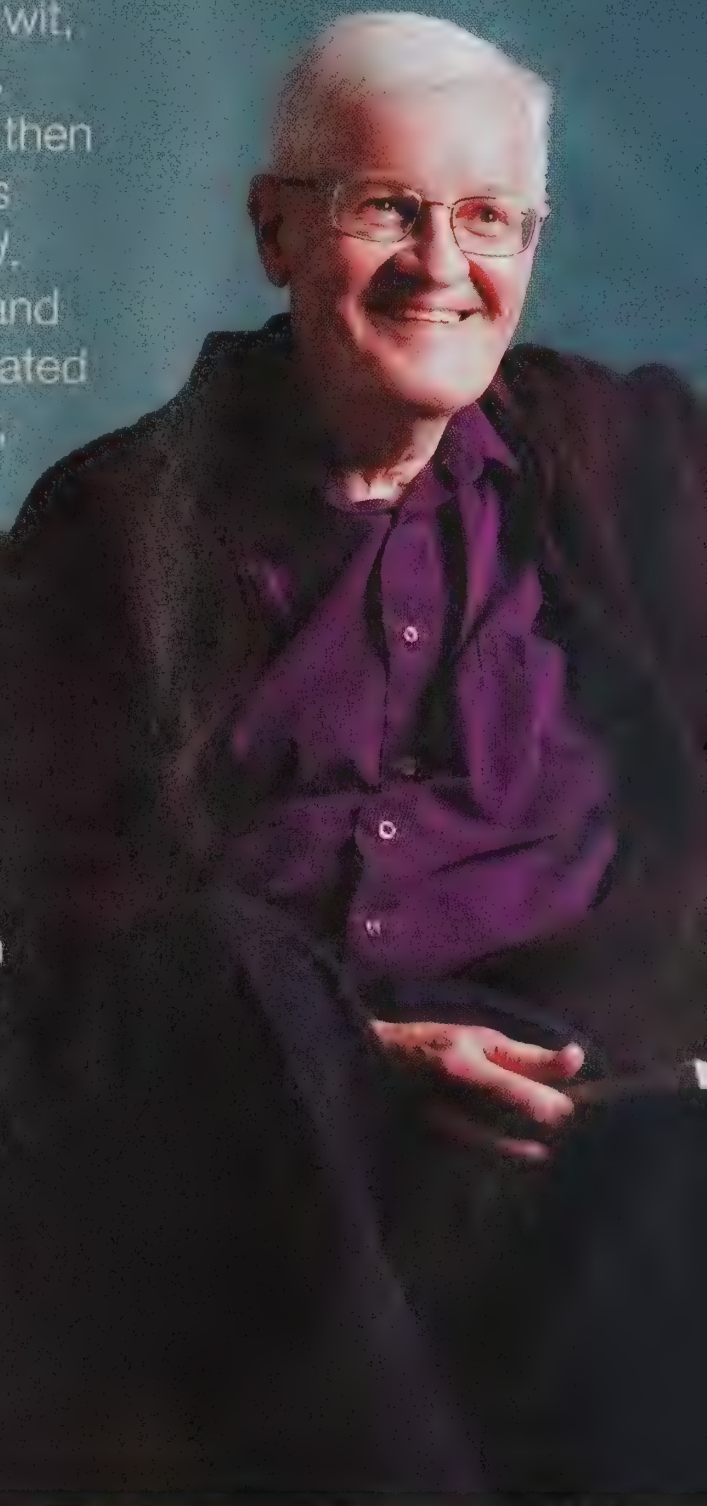
JOHN CONGRAM AND THIS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OURS. BY JUNE STEVENSON

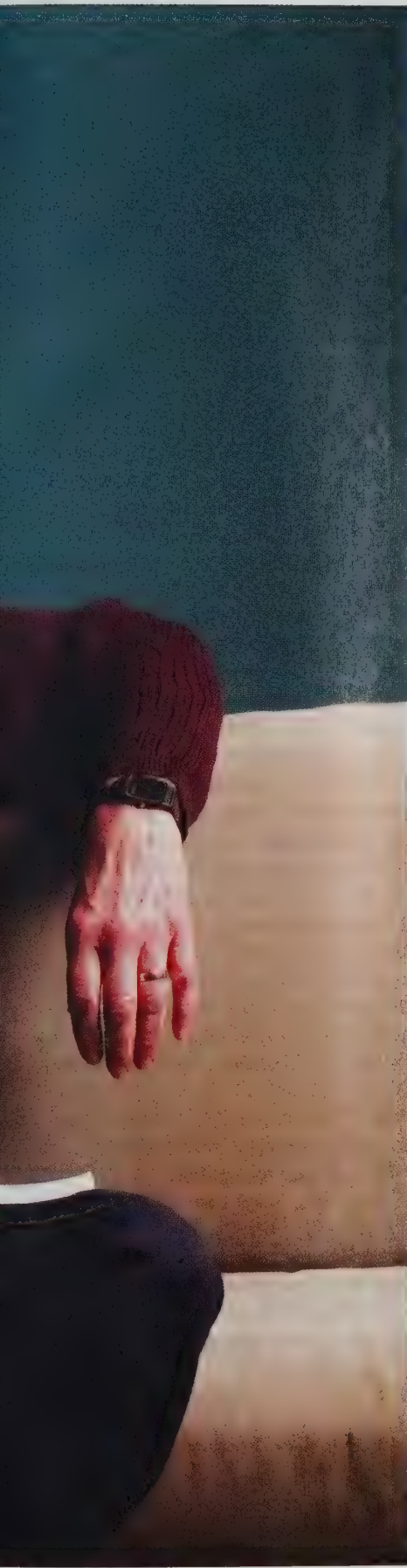
This Presbyterian Church of Ours, a slim volume packed with a lot of information and wisdom, history and theology, and a great deal of dry wit, was first published 15 years ago. The author, John Congram, was then halfway through his leadership as editor of the *Presbyterian Record*. A good writer with a clean style and a crisp sense of humour, a dedicated Presbyterian, a minister, a pastor, a teacher—it was the perfect fit of author and subject.

While Congram was at the *Record*, June Stevenson was serving her own long career as editor of *Glad Tidings* for the Women's Missionary Society. They are dear friends who share many interests and loves, though not necessarily in the same way or for the same reasons.

The *Record* asked Stevenson to talk to Congram on the 15th anniversary of his book. Here is their conversation.

—Andrew Faiz





JUNE STEVENSON: Susan Clarke of the WMS Book Room tells me your book continues to sell a steady few hundred copies every year. What does it feel like to be a best-selling author?

JOHN CONGRAM: That would be nice if it were true. I think the book is a long way from getting to that plateau, even in Canada. However, as a book aimed at a small constituency (the Presbyterian Church in Canada) it has done well. I believe its appeal lies in the fact that it was aimed at the lay membership in the church and it abounds with illustrations, many of a personal nature. One of my favourite authors, Frederick Buechner, said something to the effect that at its heart all theology is autobiographical.

JS: This book has come to be an essential handbook for congregations and individuals. I recommended that my session make copies available for elders so they can be more informed about what it means to be a Canadian Presbyterian and share this information with communicant members. It is also a valuable tool for initiating the unchurched into Presbyterianism. What was your purpose in writing this book, John?

JC: I hoped that when a person read this book they would come away feeling that they were proud (in a good sense) of being a Presbyterian and more determined to contribute positively to the best in our tradition.

I hoped they would feel good about our denomination and re-energized to participate in its life. We are an extremely tiny group of people both in the world and among the family of churches. It is easy for us to feel insignificant and to become defensive.

JS: That suggests the danger of becoming insular, which many have accused the PCC of being. What do you think about that, and where do you think the PCC stands today on ecumenical participation?

JC: If we are insular we don't do a very good job at it. Studies indicate that among all mainline denominations, the Presbyterian Church loses more of its members to other denominations. If this is the price for being ecumenical we should be prepared to pay it.

It is true that immediately after Church Union in 1925 there was a real danger of our church becoming insular. Our church had experienced a great union of the various branches of Presbyterianism in 1875 so it was not surprising that it was a Presbyterian who suggested the various denominations work more closely together, a suggestion that eventually led to the union in 1925. I think I mentioned in the book that despite numerous attempts by some in the church to have us withdraw from ecumenical movements, like the World Council and the Canadian Council, these were always beaten back. In fact, today the Presbyterian Church, as it has done for many years, carries more than its fair share of responsibility in all of the major ecumenical groups and organizations.

I also hoped that the book would help folks recover some of the essence of the Presbyterian tradition, that our church at its heart is ecumenical and catholic. We are Christian first and only secondarily Presbyterian. ➤

THE IDEA THAT PRESBYTERIANS WENT AROUND TRYING TO SPOIL EVERYONE'S FUN HAS, OF COURSE, SOME BASIS IN REALITY

JS: How would you describe the “essence” of the Presbyterian tradition?

JC: Bob Reed (*How to Survive Being Presbyterian*) says, “Presbyterianism is a series of meetings occasionally interrupted by a worship service.”

The Presbyterian tradition at its best identifies with the one, holy catholic church, emphasizes God and God’s gracious action and decision in Jesus Christ, takes the Bible seriously but not literally. It believes that what we believe is important and that belief should be confessed. It is generous and gracious in spirit (sometimes I think too generous) but tends to be traditional and conservative in theology and thus does not change quickly. I like what the writer and Presbyterian minister, Eugene Peterson, has written: “I grew up virtually without theology but with a lot of emotion and conviction [in a Pentecostal church]. When I found myself in the Presbyterian Church I couldn’t believe what theology could do. In a year I read John Calvin’s *Institutes* through twice because I was so excited about having a theology—being part of Calvin’s church. It gave me a mental structure to account for other things. It kept emotions from being despotic and unhealthy. I experienced reformed theology as having a kind of cosmic quality—large and orderly.”

JS: What can we do to get away from the Scottish influence? It continues to haunt us today. A friend once said to me, Presbyterians are allowed to have sex, they just can’t enjoy it!

JC: Bob Reed says that “many people have sex without guilt; many Presbyterians have guilt without sex.” Living in Toronto today, you still hear commentators lay the blame for almost anything that is bad or goes wrong in the city to “its Presbyterian past.”

I mention in the book how Lloyd Robertson was startled one morning to hear on the radio on his way to work a caller attribute everything evil in our city to the “white Anglo Saxon Presbyterians.” The idea that Presbyterians and especially the Scottish variety were glum and went around trying to spoil everyone’s fun has, of course, some basis in reality.

Presbyterians were leaders in attempting to maintain strict Sabbath observance in Canada. But, quite frankly, this has not been my personal experience with Presbyterians.

Luckily for those of us living in Toronto, distancing ourselves from our Scottish influences is not something we have to worry much about because it is simply happening

with an influx of people from Africa, the Caribbean and Asia into our churches.

Indeed, if the Presbyterian Church is to have a continuing presence and influence in Toronto it will largely be because of these folks and the gifts they have brought to our denomination. I hope this will gradually happen throughout the whole church. However, as the saying goes, we shouldn’t throw the baby out with the bath water. There is much that is valuable and should be preserved in our Scottish heritage.

JS: I can’t help but think of the situation with aboriginal peoples. As a church we did our best to follow current thought and government policy at the time but we failed as a denomination to significantly influence their ways, or to bring them to the Christian faith. There are only a handful of ordained aboriginal ministers in our church.

JC: You say, “We did our best to follow current thought and government policy.” But that, of course, was precisely our problem.

To me that is what the early Christian confession, “Jesus Christ is Lord,” is all about. We must be careful never to deify culture or government policy, whether right or left.

An additional question we must deal with is why, among all of the denominations, we seem to stand out in terms of our failure to attract aboriginal people into the leadership of the church. I have often puzzled as to why this is the case.

JS: The second strongest group within the PCC is the Koreans but they work more alongside rather than ‘within’ the church. What do you think?

JC: As you may know, I had a long-term relationship with a group of Korean Presbyterians in St. Mark’s, Don Mills. In the beginning they were on the roll of the English-speaking congregation. My dream was to eventually have one congregation with a team consisting of an English-speaking minister and a Korean-speaking minister working with one congregation.

That dream was never realized and eventually the Korean members established themselves as a separate congregation, largely I think, to compete with other Korean congregations in the city. However, they still continue to meet in St. Mark’s. I was moderator of the General Assembly

when ethnic Korean congregations were given permission to set up two Korean (Han Ca) presbyteries on a trial basis. Although I didn't have a vote I supported that decision with the hope that in the long run it would provide for greater participation in our church by our Korean brothers and sisters.

I think the jury is still out on that question. You may recall that ethnic Korean congregations were given the choice whether to remain with an English presbytery or join one of the new Han Ca presbyteries. At least one congregation chose to remain with an English presbytery.

Some were opposed to setting up the Han Ca presbyteries, feeling that once in Canada you should integrate into the church and that setting up separate presbyteries did damage to the unity of the church. However, at this point in our history, given cultural and language difficulties, it was difficult for Korean Presbyterians to fully participate in the presbytery and other courts of the church.

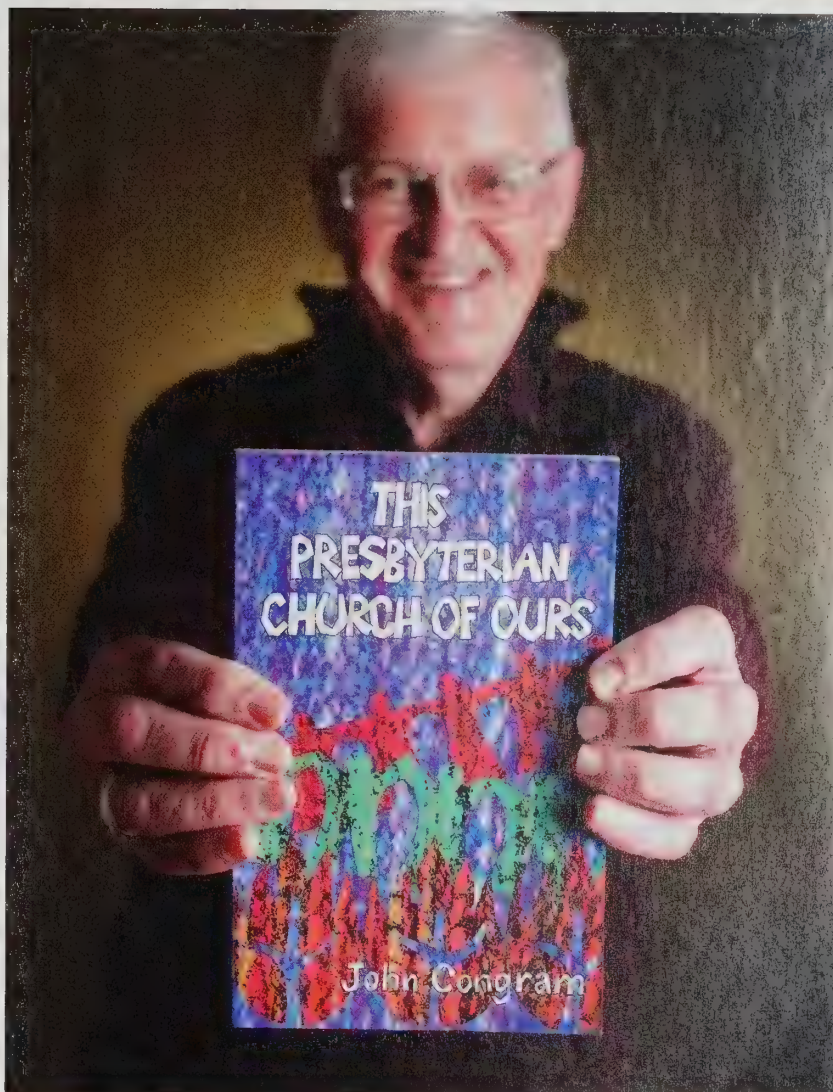
My experience with Korean folk, especially the younger generation, is that they very much want to integrate into Canadian society and this experiment will work out for the best in the end. It will be important for the non-Korean part of the church to constantly work at strengthening our relationship with our Korean brothers and sisters and not allow them to operate in isolation from the rest of the church.

JS: That brings me to the role of the PCC in the future. One of your comments to me in our earlier discussions was whether the PCC still has a role to play among the churches and in the world. Indeed, you asked, would it still be around when you finished writing the book? Upon what did you base that hope or sensibility?

JC: I think the problem we face, which most denominations face, is difficulty in presenting a credible and consistent witness to the world. I think we try to do and be too many things and as a result we are not good at much. We attempt to be all things to all people and it isn't possible.

We have become homogenized. Unless there is some unique aspect to our witness and life (in the past we claimed it was a highly educated clergy and laity that presented a thoughtful and rational view of the gospel to the world) then I think there are good grounds to question whether our denomination has a right to exist.

JS: John, you, personally, have a long and varied history in the PCC: Your ministry has included five charges, followed by being *Record* editor for 14 years. You have



served on numerous committees of the national church ... etc., etc. You are in the business of ministry. You came from a rather humble background, that is not to say that the offspring of Wingham don't achieve fame, as with Alice Munro, yet I would ask what really makes you 'Presbyterian,' and not something else?

JC: Sometimes, especially in groups of Presbyterian ministers, I have broached the question of where they would find a home should the Presbyterian Church cease to exist. The United Church, as many might expect, has never been the most popular response. Some said they would seek a home among the Lutherans, a few others with the Anglicans. For me, I think I would look to some branch of Mennonites. Perhaps it is because my experience with them has always been positive, like working with them in a storefront ministry in Hamilton. But I also think that, in many ways, the approach of the modern Mennonite resonates with what is best in Presbyterianism.

Although, as I recount in the book, it was an accident ➤

LIVING IN TORONTO TODAY, YOU STILL HEAR COMMENTATORS LAY THE BLAME FOR ALMOST ANYTHING THAT IS BAD OR GOES WRONG IN THE CITY TO 'ITS PRESBYTERIAN PAST'

(or some might say providential) that I became a Presbyterian; I have always felt comfortable in the Presbyterian Church. The most important paragraph in my book is the last one. I think it sums up why I have been happy to remain a Presbyterian all my life.

JS: I'd like to play devil's advocate here and push some buttons. Is it possible a new and updated book on our church might include some dialogue, if not actual argument on current theological thinking? Take the *Record's* Theology 101 series. In his first article, Two Kinds of Knowledge (March 2009) Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland deals with religion and science. He says, "... Science must assume order but cannot explain where it came from. If a scientist tries, he becomes a philosopher—or theologian!" He later says, "The Bible teaches that the universe is created, but its account of how this happened is not science or history but Saga (Genesis 1-11)." I know that many persons in the pews are struggling with these issues and are not satisfied with what the church has to say.

JC: I think that what you say is true of people 50 years and older. However, my sense is that younger people are less interested in the question, "Is it true?" than they are in the question, "Is it relevant?"

Young people I know want to know if what the church says and does has any relevance to their everyday struggles and life. Sadly, many conclude that it has no relevance. As a preacher and teacher I always tried to place high value on relevance, otherwise, it seemed to me what we did was only sound and fury, signifying nothing. Many of the 'successful' churches in Canada and the mega-churches in the United States draw huge crowds of followers, largely, I believe, because they seek to speak and act in a relevant way. We may sometimes decry their fundamentalist approach to the Bible but we should learn from their practical approaches. Brian McLaren makes this point in his book, *A New Kind of Christian*.

On the other hand I think you have come up with a great idea for the *Record*. Why not reprint the articles in Theology 101, provide a study guide to come with them, and make them available to study groups in the church? This could also be made available online.

JS: In the same article, McLelland speaks about how religion can learn from science: "Just as the geocentric (earth-centred) cosmology was displaced by the heliocentric (sun-centred), so the new map of the universe of faiths must shift from a Christianity-centred to a God-centred picture." These are radical thoughts for a Presbyterian, at least in written form. Is there a place in a book of this kind for exploring current thought? In fact, do you think Presbyterians will ever be able to consider a 'God-centred' universe? I suppose this conflicts sharply with one of our most sacred tenets that Christ is the head of the church and it is a slippery slope from there on?

JC: I have always felt that there is a place in the church for the honourable heretic. People who question and push the boundaries are invaluable in the church. By honourable I mean they are sincerely exploring the issues.

One time I said that our purpose in the church is to raise the dead, not simply to raise hell.

However, sometimes the line between the two is extremely fine and easily crossed. When I was considering becoming the editor of the *Record*, I consulted Al Forrest who had been editor of the *United Church Observer*. His words have always stuck with me. "The purpose of the editor of a church magazine," he told me, "is to provide the loyal opposition."

I must say that I don't see the conflict you perceive between a God-centred universe and the proclamation that Christ is the head of the church and, I would add, of the world as well. We are, after all, a monotheistic religion, and our allegiance is to God who we see through Jesus Christ. Sometimes we deify Jesus in a way that makes him replace God in our theology.

JS: I would even challenge you on a particular statement from the book. On page 53, in relation to God's sovereignty, you say, "We do not have a spark of immortality in us." Is that not the same as having a spark of the divine within us, and don't we all have that which moves us towards becoming one with a Supreme Being? Is the nature of humankind not divine and that relates to how God longs for us to be with God? As Pamela McCarroll says in *Where in the World Is God?*!, another article in the series Theology 101 (March 2010): "... our

essence reflects the divine image—humans as God made and intended us to be.”

JC: For me there is a big difference between saying that God placed God’s image in us and that each of us has within us a piece of the divine. Over the centuries there has been much debate as to what the image of God in us is. For me it is simply the potential to love and be loved in a way that enables us to be fully human, not divine. To quote a church father, “God’s glory is man fully alive.” If there is a spark of the divine in each of us that would mean a part of us never dies. The Bible contends we really do die and return to the dust from which we were originally made. God then resurrects us.

JS: I will let you off the hot seat by pursuing more ‘Presbyterian’ thoughts. One thing that became particularly clear to me from your book was just how much importance Presbyterians place on the mind and education. John Vissers in his March 2009 article in the *Record*, *Teaching the Teaching Elders*, emphasized how Calvin thought that the people of God needed to know their Bibles. Vissers says that “we are living at a time when the church ... needs [a learned leadership] who can articulate biblical faith clearly, credibly, and compellingly ...”

When I came into the Presbyterian Church in the mid-70s I was encouraged by that thinking. My personal journey has been strengthened and enhanced by study and reflection. I like to think that Presbyterians bring to the table their own conclusions, reflecting thought, prayer and study. It seems to me that some of the religions that place more emphasis on ritual lose this kind of personal understanding. Any comment, John?

JC: I think we all need to do the things you suggest. However, the process should never be an individualistic process. Calvin taught that in our attempts to understand the Bible, for example, we should listen to what the Holy Spirit is teaching us through the words of scripture, but we should also test this out by what other passages in the Bible teach, by what our contemporaries in the church teach and by the history of Christian thought.

This is what Richard Mouw, in his book, *Consulting the Faithful*, describes as the wisdom that dwells, and here he quotes Cardinal Newman, “deep in the bosom of the mystical body of ‘Christ.’” We may wish that it was otherwise but all of our relatives in the church, including some who disagree with us and others we don’t like, must be in on the process of discerning God’s will for our lives.

JS: There are current issues with which our church, and others, has been dealing: homosexuality for one. Is there a place in a book of this kind for current thinking as opposed to the church’s stand on the issue?

JC: Perhaps a chapter on important social issues of our time

like the question of homosexuality would have enriched the book. However, I had a limit on how large the book could be placed on me by the publisher who, while interested in the subject, wanted to produce a book that could be sold for a profit. It would have been difficult to do justice to even one of these issues in a book like this. But again this might be a worthy project for the brains at the *Record* such as I have suggested with Theology 101.

JS: Most mainline denominations are facing declining membership today. Our society is searching for meaning in other aspects of living. Personally, I am not discouraged. I believe in Presbyterianism. The Presbyterian Church is, for me, the place I want to be. How do you feel about that, and what is your prediction for the future of the church?

JC: Sometimes I have been asked how I can preside at the funeral of a well-known reprobate. I always reply that I am able to do this because I am a Presbyterian. As such I always reserve the first and last word about anyone’s life for God. I am not in the business of determining the ultimate destiny of anyone. I think I would say the same thing about the Presbyterian Church. Its future is in the hands of God. My task is to be as faithful as I can which sometimes includes being a questioning presence in the church. Sometimes I think our church is suicidal, such as when it fails to consider seriously cost in terms of personnel and the cost of yearly assemblies. As a result, I sometimes get discouraged but I never despair.

JS: Finally, John, you said to me that the last paragraph in the book is for you the most important one. You wrote, and I cut this down to the essential thought, “Within its life, I have been given the freedom to use my gifts, and to fall on my face. Its people have supported me in difficult times and celebrated with me in good times. ... Finally, a host of loyal and loving friends in this church family have taught me the truth of Martin Luther’s word: if God is our father, then surely the church is our mother. In her arms I have discovered life.” What would you say about that 15 years later?

JC: I would say, Amen. ■

This interview has been excerpted to fit into the magazine. A longer version appears on presbyterianrecord.ca.

All Theology 101 articles are available online, as well, some longer than the versions published in the magazine. Almost all come with a study guide. Certainly each one is thought provoking and perfect for further group studies at home or in church.

This Presbyterian Church of Ours by Rev. John Congram can be obtained through the WMS Book Room, at sclarke@presbyterian.ca, or 1-800-619-7301.

SUPER SMALL SUPER STAR

A TINY CONGREGATION CHALLENGES TRADITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF CHURCH.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

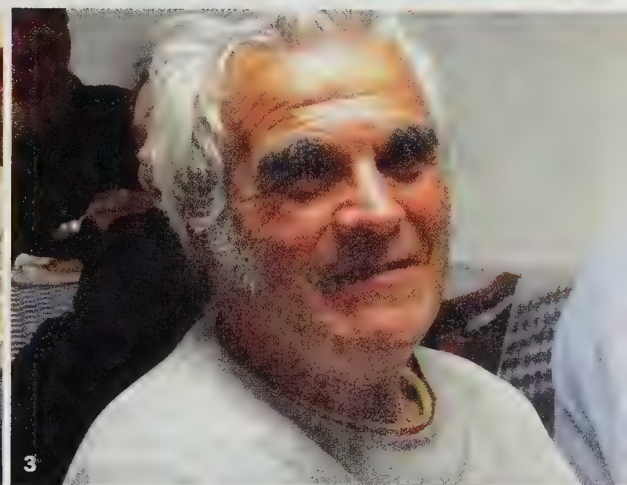
WHOEVER SAID good things come in small packages must have been thinking about St. Andrew's, Sutton, Ont. The congregation of 20, in a town of about 3,000 near the shores of Lake Simcoe, may be small in numbers, but its heart is practically bursting.

"It's not the size of the congregation that matters," said Gayle Clarke, clerk of session at St. Andrew's. "It's the commitment. It's finding what the community needs and fulfilling that need."

That need comes in the form of a weekly community dinner—going strong now for six years this month—that

serves everyone from the homeless to widows to young families, to the deaf community and people living in group homes. They estimate that about a quarter of the meal regulars depend on the dinners for physical sustenance; many of the others simply come for the company and fellowship that is so often found over food.

Despite its popularity, the ministry, which is known throughout the community, isn't exactly a moneymaker and the organizers are often concerned about funds. "Whenever we get down in our finances, and we wonder how much we're going to have to kick in out of our own pockets, a cheque from an independent source always shows up," said Brenda Dickie, an elder, cook team member and baker ➤



1. St. Andrew's, Sutton, members Leo Teufel, Gayle Clarke, and Brenda and Denver Dickie in the sanctuary.
2. Dinner regulars Heather and Dorothy
3. John 4. Murielle and Marilyn 5. The cook team from the local United Church (along with some St. Andrew's folk) in the kitchen after another successful Tuesday meal.

“Whenever we get down in our finances, and we wonder how much we’re going to have to kick in out of our own pockets, a cheque from an independent source always shows up”

extraordinaire. “It’s the most amazing thing.

“It encourages us because if we weren’t meant to do this, we’d run out of money, and no one would come,” said Dickie. “God wants it to be like this.”

Congregations within the presbytery sometimes send donations their way, and local businesses donate turkeys for special meals. Individuals will often drop by with a tray of food, or pop in at the end of a meal just to wash dishes. Christmas meals can cause their numbers to swell to over 100, though the weekly average is about 60.

Five teams share the cooking duties; two from St. Andrew’s, one each from local Anglican and United churches, and one from St. Andrew’s in Aurora when there’s a fifth Tuesday in a month. Clarke’s husband, Gerry, coordinates the meals. Together, they’ve never missed a dinner—even if it falls on Christmas Day.

The ministry began when, during a session meeting, the group discussed how they approached outreach, often giving money to designated charities. “We talked about how that’s the easy way. That we didn’t have to get our hands dirty. We didn’t have to get involved,” said Clarke.

So they started to think about what the community needed—undeterred by stories from other churches that community dinners had already been tried and failed.

“Six people showed up to that first meal,” said Clarke. “But by the end of the month, it was up to about 40 or 50, and we found more people willing to contribute. As we got into it, we found there were a lot of people who needed a lot of things.”

When a member of the deaf community—who are now regulars at the dinners—died last October, St. Andrew’s was asked to hold the funeral, since the woman, who never set foot inside the sanctuary on Sunday morning, said St.

Andrew’s was “her church.”

“Many of them feel like when they’ve been here Tuesday night for dinner, they’ve been to church,” said Clarke. “This is church for them.”

And is it?

Rev. Kristine O’Brien thinks so. The minister at Trafalgar, Oakville, Ont., was part of the Emmaus Conference held last spring, where presbytery members from across Canada were challenged to re-think church. Many at that conference—O’Brien included—believe the traditional view of church may no longer fit into present society.

“How do we measure church?” O’Brien asked. “Usually by people in pews and money in the plate. But that doesn’t give the whole picture. What about watching lives changed, and mission blossom? Doesn’t that matter too?”

“We have to find ways to be self-sustaining without relying on the Sunday morning offering because people are not there,” she continued. “It’s going to need to be different, but what will it look like?”

This is where Rev. Herb Gale comes in. The PCC’s head of planned giving (and Moderator of General Assembly) paid St. Andrew’s a visit last November. “I was struck by the spirit of those engaged in this ministry,” Gale told the *Record*. “It’s not a group of people sitting around wondering how to keep their doors open. They are spirit-driven. These people have a deep commitment and passion for what God is already doing in this ministry.

“I see them as a real sign of hope for the PCC.”

Gale suggested several initiatives to help foster future success including partnering with local businesses that would each pay for, say, a meal a month; establishing a field placement with Knox College, Toronto, where students would fill the pulpit while getting hands-on experience on doing small church ministry that makes a real impact; and moving worship from Sunday morning to Tuesday nights. While there would be no pressure for diners to attend worship, they would come to know that it naturally follows, and if they wanted to attend, they could do so easily.

Gale said this mission model will likely become more and more common, and that small congregations shouldn’t be slated for closure simply because numbers in the pews are low. “[Church growth guru, Kenyon] Callahan says it’s not the number of people in the pews but the number of people impacted by the ministry of the church.”

The vitality of St. Andrew’s ministry despite its small size is one reason why interim moderator Rev. Tom Vais has a soft spot for St. Andrew’s. “The presence of Christ is very real, whether inside the sanctuary at 10:00 in the morning, or out in the community. They’re living out what it means to be part of the body of Christ. I see that as church. Not in the traditional sense, but in a very real way.” ■

Amy MacLachlan is the *Record*’s senior writer.

From the Moderator

The Real McCoy

HOW TO INCORPORATE A RICH DIVERSITY INTO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. BY HERB GALE

The origin of the expression, "the real McCoy" is very interesting. Trained as a mechanical engineer in Scotland, Canadian-born Elijah McCoy could only find work as an oiler for a railroad in Michigan. As he performed his duties, McCoy became convinced that there had to be a better way to oil a locomotive's machinery than by bringing the engine to a full stop and oiling the parts by hand. His solution: an automatic, steam-powered lubricating device that oiled the machinery while the engine was in motion, enabling train locomotives and other steam engines to run more efficiently. Many knock-offs of McCoy's invention were later manufactured, but they broke down easily. So, railroad-purchasing agents always asked for "the real McCoy." What began as railroad jargon soon passed into the common vernacular.

It's truly a remarkable story. But it is made even more remarkable when we learn that McCoy was an African American, the son of slaves who had fled to Canada from Kentucky via the underground railroad. Ironically, even though racial discrimination prevented McCoy from landing the type of job for which he was trained and qualified, his hands-on experience oiling the train's machinery provided just the impetus for his fertile mind to devise an alternative method of lubrication. Just think, the railroad company had "the real McCoy" on their payroll, and didn't even know it!

We are an ethnically diverse nation, but it is still primarily the faces of

white males we see in the boardrooms of our corporations and companies. According to the Canadian Board Diversity Council's 2010 Annual Report Card, women only hold 15 per cent of board seats, visible minorities 5.3 per cent, persons with disabilities 2.9 per cent and aboriginal peoples

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SUNDAY ACROSS
CANADA ONE WILL
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PRAISED IN AT
LEAST 17 DIFFERENT
LANGUAGES

only 0.8 per cent. What we see in the boardrooms of our nation's companies is what we also tend to see in the courts and committees of our denomination.

It was this concern that prompted the Presbytery of Ottawa to overture the 135th General Assembly, requesting the Life and Mission Agency to establish a task force to "study [the issue] and offer a strategy to help the church at all levels ... to appreciate and welcome racial and ethnic minorities and to value the skills and spiritual gifts they have to offer." We'll hear the results this June at General Assembly in London, Ont.

February is Black History Month, the month set aside in Canada and the U.S. to celebrate the achievements of people such as Elijah McCoy who have contributed so much to

the fabric of North American society. Within the PCC, the third Sunday of February has been designated as Heritage Sunday, a time to remember our Reformed history as a denomination and to celebrate our rich heritage.

But we would be mistaken if we assumed that meant we can only celebrate our heritage with bagpipes and tartan. For while the Presbyterian Church in Canada has a rich Scottish heritage, we are an increasingly diverse denomination composed of people who have come from many cultures and nationalities.

The face of the Presbyterian Church is changing. On any given Sunday across Canada one will hear God's name praised in at least 17 different languages. One of the great challenges and opportunities for us as a denomination is how we can incorporate this rich diversity into the life, ministry and decision-making structures of our church. I'm not exactly sure how we will do it or what the church will look like, but I trust in the One who beckons us forward and invites us to fall in line behind Him. He is the Lord of the dance, and He is the real McCoy! ■

Blessings,



Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving for the PCC. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca



Wasaga Beach Community, Ont.

Creative Hands started last fall at Wasaga Beach Community Church. Projects include prayer shawls, pneumonia vests and milk bag sleeping mats. Seventy-five pneumonia vests have been sent to India, and approximately 30 crocheted milk bag sleeping mats to other needy areas (through the Christian Children's Food Ministries, via St. Andrew's, Port Credit, Ont.). This fall, chemo caps will be added to the repertoire. *From the back row: Marilyn Jones, Gloria Douglas, Lois Boyter, Lorraine Phillips, Marilyn Schneider. Front row: Muriel MacTaggart, Nancy Thatcher, Doreen Playter*



First, Kenora, Ont.

Kay Coullis (right) has been playing the organ and piano at First for 55 years! She was celebrated in October, and is seen here with Rev. Rod Lamb and choir director, Suzanne McIntosh.





West Point Grey, Vancouver

West Point Grey dedicated a new church sign for the congregations of West Point Grey and Doorae Korean who are in a covenant relationship with one another in Vancouver. Rev. Sylvia Cleland led the dedication.

St. Andrew's, Pictou, N.S.

St. Andrew's, commonly known as the Kirk, recently held an auction and dessert party with proceeds going towards the recent church renovations (a new entrance to the basement, new stairways, an elevator, an accessible washroom and a new meeting room). This hall tree was made by Kirk minister, Rev. Steven Webb, who is a woodworker and cabinet maker. He fashioned it from one of the doors discarded during the renovations. This historic piece of furniture, which included original cast brass door knobs and old coat hooks from another area, was offered for sale at the auction. Thus the old helped pay for the new. Admiring the hall tree are Betty Ann Battist, chair of the auction and Rev. Steven Webb.



Cape Breton, N.S.

The Presbytery of Pictou handed Peter MacDonald his call to Boularderie Pastoral Charge, Cape Breton. Rev. Charles McPherson, clerk; Rev. Mary Anne Grant, moderator; Peter MacDonald; Rev. Dr. Glen Matheson.

Important note: Due to a technical error some of your email, whether a Letter to the Editor, or to People and Places, may not have come through. **If you sent us anything, please resend to: PRMail@presbyterian.ca** Thank you. —Editor

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EXECUTIVE POSITION

WITHIN THE LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, through the Life and Mission Agency, is inviting applications for the executive position of Associate Secretary, Canadian Ministries/The Vine at the national office in Toronto. The Associate Secretary will actively assist congregations and presbyteries in finding and using human, on-line, printed and financial resources to enhance the mission and ministry of all constituencies of our denomination. A complete position description is available on the webpage at www.presbyterian.ca



Applications should be submitted to: The General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency
50 Wynford Dr. Toronto, ON M3C 1J7 Email: rfee@presbyterian.ca

The deadline for receiving applications is TUESDAY, MARCH 1ST, 2011

Knox Presbyterian Church Toronto is seeking a Senior Minister

Knox Presbyterian Church Toronto, a Reformed evangelical community that calls all people to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and equips them to grow in faith and service to the glory of God, is seeking a Senior Minister. Located in the heart of the city near the university, Knox offers a diverse range of ministries including families/youth/young adults, international/students/newcomers, contemporary and traditional worship, and local/national/international outreach through Knox World Mission, the largest congregational-based missionary outreach in the denomination.

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No vacancies at this time.

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1V7; 403-288-0544; b.smith@vapc.ca.

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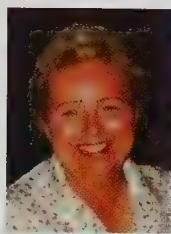
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Obituaries



Elder, Valda Lilybelle, 1930-2010.

Valda Elder passed away peacefully on Friday, Dec. 3, 2010 at the Credit Valley Hospital, Mississauga, Ont., with her family at her side. Valda was predeceased by her late husband of 41 years, Rev. John Calvin Elder (1931-1993). Loving mother to Dawn Berzins (George), John Elder (Dianne) and Ruth Elder (Jean Larocque). Loving grandmother to Karen (Aaron), Emily (Clay), Marcus, Elizabeth, Stephen, John Patrick, Laure and Olivier. Loving sister to Rev. Iris Ford and Rev. Victor Ford.

Born in Nova Scotia, Valda spent her childhood in Bermuda and returned to Canada to become a deaconess with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and a graduate of the University of Toronto. Valda lived in North Bay and Mississauga, Ont., to be close to her children and grandchildren. Valda was devoted to family, the church and the teachings of Christ. She loved to sing and be involved with the church choir.

The family would like to thank the personnel at the Barclay House Retirement Residence in North Bay and the

Erin Mills Lodge Retirement Centre in Mississauga for their wonderful care over the years. In keeping with Valda's wishes, a private ceremony was held by her family in celebration of her life. As expressions of sympathy, donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation would be greatly appreciated.

Fairley, Rev. William, 91 of Cameron, Ont., died on Sept. 18. Originally from Edinburgh, Scotland, Bill began his ministry as a catechist in 1955. He graduated from Knox College in 1961 and continuously served congregations in Ontario and Nova Scotia until his death. He was predeceased by his wife, Rita in 1996.



Sutherland, Stephen "Red," passed suddenly on Friday, Dec. 3, 2010 at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, Man., with his wife, Jo Ann, the love of his life at his side. Stephen is survived by his parents, Ronald and Nora; wife, Jo Ann (née Menchenton); sons, Alex (age 19) and Jacob (age 17); his brothers, Colin

(Lisa), Bruce (Laurie), Eric (Ashley); and nieces, Keara, Maya and Jayme.

Stephen was born Nov. 27, 1961 in Mississauga, Ont. He went to Lorne Park Secondary School and was a graduate of the University of Windsor in computer science with a minor in religious studies. Stephen met Jo Ann at a Presbyterian Young People's Society gathering in 1985 and was engaged four weeks later. They married June 5, 1986. He was employed at Mercer for 26 years, first in Toronto and then the Winnipeg office in 1988. They moved to Winnipeg during Thanksgiving weekend of 1988 where Stephen was active with MENSA Manitoba.

Stephen was a proud father of both Alex and Jacob. When Jacob was diagnosed with autism at age two, Stephen, together with friends and the support of the St. Amant Centre, founded MFEAT in Winnipeg to help families with autistic children. Stephen remained active in support of families with autistic children and was a current board of directors member of the St. Amant Centre. Last year Jacob moved into a St. Amant group home down the street from the Sutherland family home. Stephen and Jo enjoyed extra time together with Alex.

In Stephen's memory, donations may be made to the St. Amant Foundation, 440 River Rd., Winnipeg, Man., R2M 3Z9; stamant.mb.ca. ■

CENTRAL TORONTO... CALLING YOU?



Rosedale Church, Toronto, has commenced a search for our next Minister. Find the Position Description, for a vacancy to start June 2011 at our www.rpcc.ca website - - or contact the Rev. Stephen Kendall, Interim Moderator, at skendall@presbyterian.ca or (416) 441-1111 x 227.

Called to Wonder

Called to Wonder is 10 years old!

share!



For a decade Erin and Jennifer have covered many different topics.

Now they would like you to share your ideas for Called to Wonder.

What would you like to talk about?

Would you like to talk about school? Bullying? Friendship? Loss of Friendship? Recess? Teachers? Parents? Divorce? Brothers and sisters?

Would you like to discuss good and evil and what they mean?

Write Erin and Jennifer a letter!

Deadline for ideas:
March 31st, 2011

Parents and Sunday school teachers, please submit your ideas as well. In the next few months, we'll be adding an online forum for you to discuss your ideas and questions, and to download more activities.

What are your ideas for Called to Wonder topics?

Dear Erin and Jennifer,

I would really like you to write about:

child's name and age, or adult's name and age(s) of children you work with:

Later in 2011, the Called to Wonder website and blog!

Send your ideas to PRMail@presbyterian.ca, or mail this page to Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M3C 1J7

The love gurus of our age are all wrong. It's not attained by imagining the unattainable or by fantasizing the impossible. It is by daily living out a life of devotion and commitment

For the Journey, continued from page 50

candles flickering in the centre of the table (all of our candles are stubby paraffin victims from the last power outage). The rest of the evening is censored, even in my imagination.

There is a parable in the Bible that says: "Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love." (Proverbs 5:18-19) Be thou ravished always with her love?

How does that work? Linda and I have been married for going on 41 years. And there always seems to be a gap, sometimes larger than others, between the experience of our love as I imagine it, and the experience of our love as I live it. How do you keep the love going over the long term? How do you maintain the romance and the passion?

My grandparents taught me a lot. They were married for a good long time and one day not long before Grandma passed away there was an event that has stuck with me as though it were yesterday. We were all gathered at an aunt's house in Kimberly, B.C., for a dinner with Grandma and Grandpa. Grandma went upstairs to get dressed for the occasion, and somewhere between the bottom of the stairs and the top she got mixed up between dinner and the beach. Eventually she came down, dressed in a bathing suit, nylon stockings and high heels. We all laughed. Grandpa didn't. His eyes were lit up with passion and romance as he turned to all of us and shushed us with the words: "Your mother is still a fine looking woman!" His eyes revealed a man who was always ravished with her love. I am convinced that it was the product of 50-odd years of the everyday; the everyday marital devotion accented with tea and toast in bed, the heel of the freshly carved Sunday roast and being



the best turned out man in the crowd, always served up just for her.

"Be thou ravished always with her love." How does that work? A lifetime of everyday devotion, that's how it works. The love gurus of our age are all wrong. It's not attained by imagining the unattainable or by fantasizing the impossible. It is by daily living out a life of devotion and commitment, or as the parable puts it, daily "rejoicing in the wife of your youth." And believe me, I have much to rejoice in.

All this thinking about matrimonial romance reminds me of something that has come up in my Bible reading of late. Interestingly, the Bible speaks about our relation to God using wedded bliss as a metaphor on numerous occasions. Isaiah does it frequently—54:5. Jeremiah does it even more often—2:2. It's the main theme driving Hosea's work—2:19. And the apostle Paul gets into the act as well—Ephesians 5:25. At one point in the rear end of scripture, the Risen Christ is speaking to his followers in Ephesus congratulating them on a life of great and costly religion. And then in the midst of all this it is as though he almost blurts out, "But you have forgotten your first love!" (Revelations 2:4; Webber's translation). It seems to me that this is just another way of Christ crying, "Whatever else, be thou always ravished by my love!"

The amazing thought that is warming my heart this chilly February Valentine's Day as I ponder how to be always ravished by Linda's love, is that God wants me to be always ravished by His love, too. This phrase, "ravished by His love," was a favourite one used by writers in the period of the Reformation and the Awakening to speak about the experience of God's love. These writers were likely inspired by Proverbs (5:19) and Song of Solomon (4:9). They may also have been moved by *The Confession of St. Augustine* (9.10). At one point John Calvin writes: "To be brief, we must be sure of the infinite good that is done to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that we may be ravished in love with our God and inflamed with a right affection to obey Him, and keep ourselves strictly in awe of Him, to honour Him with our thoughts, with all our affections and with all our hearts." (Sermon 42 on Ephesians, *John Calvin as Pastor, Teacher and Theologian*, by R.C. Zachman.) Be always ravished by God's love? How does that work? How does it work over a long time of faith? Well, it seems to me the analogy holds true from cover to cover. It does not come by imagining the unattainable or by fantasizing the impossible. It is by living out a life of devotion and commitment to God in the everyday stuff of life, or as the parable puts it, daily "rejoicing in the (saving God) of your (first faith)." And believe me, I know I have much to rejoice in. ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



On Being Ravished by Love

HOW DOES THAT WORK? BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

IT'S FEBRUARY, Valentine's Day. As usual I haven't got a clue what to do. I am often compelled to watch what my son calls "chick flicks." Now let's be clear. I am not referring to X-rated movies but rather what Linda calls "romantic films." I think that's part of the problem. In my mind's eye I want to mark this day of romance and love in a Hollywood kind of way. I think you know what I mean. Linda arrives at home after a hard day at the office (Linda is a homemaker) and as she drives down the cobblestone driveway (we have a muddy, dirt two-track) she finds a trail of red rose petals leading to the front door (all of ours are back doors).

Intrigued and with her emotions fully tweaked, she stretches her sensual, shapely, silk-clad legs (Linda has the legs but clads them in Stanfields and denim in February) out

of the Mercedes sedan (we own a one-ton pickup truck) and begins to walk up the pathway (covered in a foot of snow that I haven't yet shoveled) with her high heel shoes clicking in excitement (Linda only wears hiking boots in February). She opens the front door and the romantic sound of Mozart wafts gently towards her ears (Linda favours country music). She steps into the house on the path of rose petals and notices that the dining room (we have a table about two feet away from the kitchen sink) is elegantly laid for dinner with the best silver (we have stainless steel that rusts in the dishwasher) and English bone china (we have the real Chinese stuff). She flares her nostrils and smells the delightful smell of rosemary and lamb (I have trouble with ham and eggs). The smell of the rosemary and lamb is intermingled with the enticing odor of the long and slender, scented beeswax

continued on page 49



Grande Prairie, Alta.

MY CHURCH BY PATRICIA SCHNEIDER

When I had lost hope
You opened up your doors and your arms.
You found places for me
To help
To learn
And to love.
You listened as I questioned.
You gave me responsibility.
You saw God's image in me.

When tragedy struck
You held me up
You comforted me.
You are my church.

God in action,
Reaching out in mercy,
Loving, cherishing,
Reflecting God's glory.

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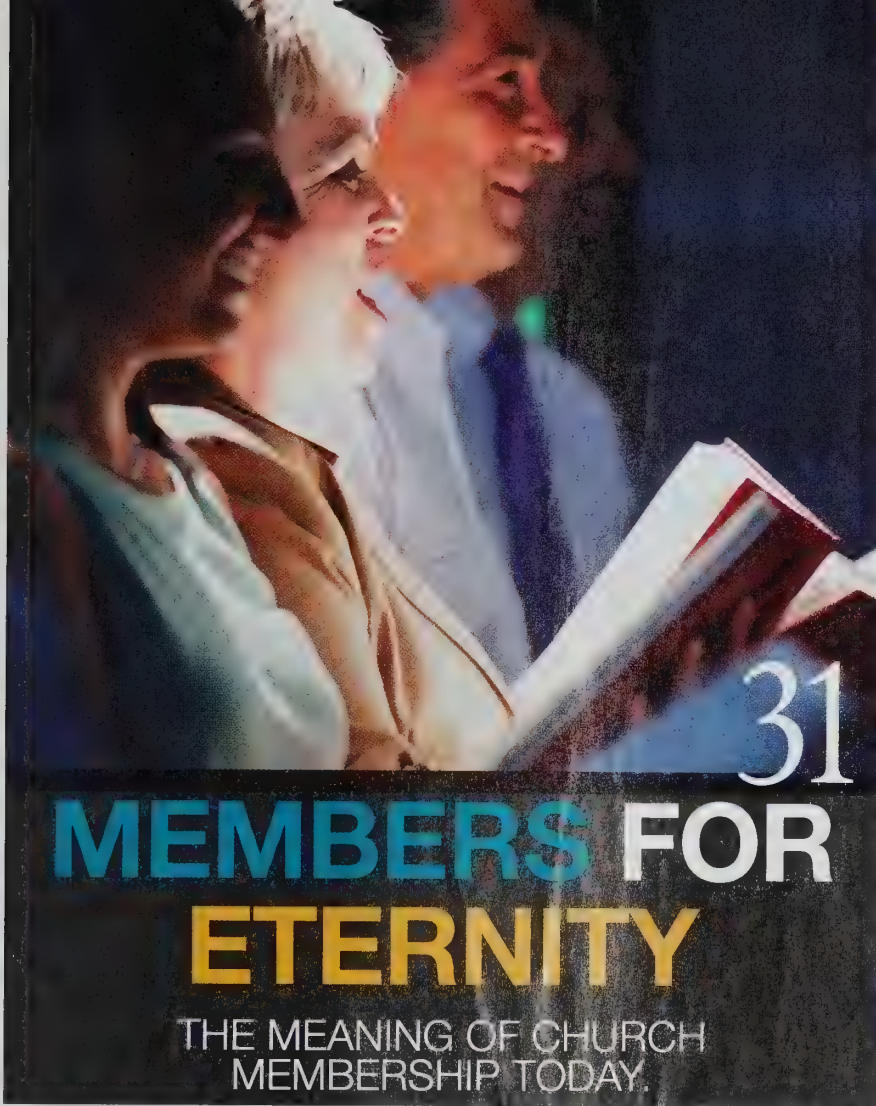
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On the Cover: Rob Melnychuk/Digital-Vision

Encountering God is the Goal

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT CREATING RULES TO KEEP PEOPLE OUT. BY DAVID HARRIS

My German classics professor, trying to explain to us how a verb in Greek could have two apparently opposite meanings, put it ever so succinctly: “Ja, it means go and it means come. It’s the same thing!”

It wasn’t obvious at the time, but I gradually learned that opposites often have a common linguistic root.

I raise this as an introduction to the word “member,” the root of the word membership, which is a common thread throughout this issue.

Member comes from the Sanskrit for flesh. Its root meaning is more strongly conveyed by the word membrane. At a glance, they appear to be opposites: Membrane is a whole covering; member is just part of a whole, an individual.

Common root. Whole and part. But member has an inherent sense of the whole that the individual is part of.

Which brings us to the question of church membership explored in this month’s cover story on page 31 by Will Ingram and Matthew Ruttan. It’s a question that has come before General Assemblies. But assemblies are legislative sessions and free-ranging discussions are difficult in that setting.

We hope that raising the matter in the *Record* might provoke an interesting and informed discussion about what membership in the church might look like in the future.

Part of the discussion is bound to involve questions about what, if anything, a person has to subscribe to become a member of the church. To traditionalists this may seem an odd remark: membership necessarily involves agreeing to the fundamentals of the organization.

In the postmodern world, however,



Wrestling with the difficult points made by someone who sees the world a little differently challenges us to grow

what even constitutes fundamentals is up for questioning. Two of the church’s academic thinkers, Joe McLelland and John Vissers, take this up in the latest installment of our Theology 101 series.

Postmodern philosopher McLelland takes a slightly different approach than theologian Vissers, but it is not about agreeing with John as opposed to Joe, or vice versa.

In fact, I would encourage those who find themselves inclined more to one author than the other after reading both to take a day or two and then re-read the author they are less inclined to.

Because it’s only by wrestling with the difficult points made by someone who sees the world a little differently, that any of us is challenged and grows.

So what does it mean to be a member of the Presbyterian Church in Canada? Even more fundamentally, what does it mean to be a Christian?

This may seem obvious to those who have lived within the church community most or all of their lives, but it is a deep and perplexing question for many others today.

Whether we like it or even believe it, we live in a postmodern age in Canada. In simple terms, postmodernism is a way of describing current attitudes that question institutions and their underlying certainties.

This fundamental questioning about whether truth has any objectivity or universality is one of the reasons people no longer go to church.

But it is emphatically not—as too often suggested—a turning away from God. Far from it. Most Canadians still believe in God. The questions are what do they believe about God, whom do they trust to talk about God with, and where can they encounter God? Increasingly, the answer for the latter two questions has been: “not in church.”

Instead of creating more or different membership rules, perhaps we should focus on creating conditions where people can encounter God—creating those “thin spaces” that St. Columba identified on Iona, (see p. 23).

Because while God is not completely obscure—He has shown us His face and more in the person of Jesus—at least in our earthly life, bounded by time and space, much about the divine life and purpose does remain hidden, a mystery.

It is only in the next life that we are promised that we shall see God “face to face.”

So perhaps that is what it really means to be a member of the church; it is to recognize that although we are individuals, we are all united by the divine membrane of love. ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.3, MARCH 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

CONVENER **Michael Munnik**
board@presbyterianrecord.ca

ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

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Phone: 905-833-6200, ext. 25

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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634
Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.
Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government
of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF)
for our publishing activities.

Subscription rates, GST/HST not included.

Every Home Plan: \$19.50

Individual: \$28

U.S.A. and foreign: \$38 **Single copies:** \$3.95

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Address all correspondence and changes of address
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Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Phone: (416) 441-1111; 1-800-619-7301

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Through Prayer and Action

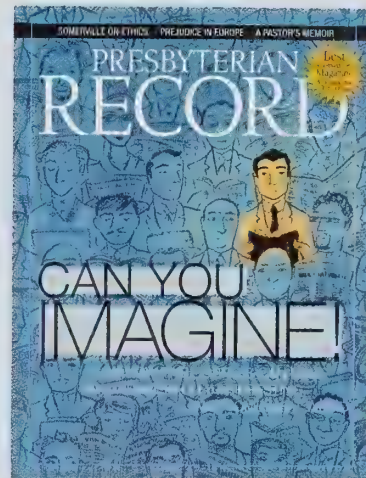
Re A Shift in the Wind, December 2010

Rev. Hans Kouwenberg makes some very interesting comments and poses many interesting questions. His final comment and question is of special interest to me: "I know the Life and Mission Agency has consulted among its membership and with the Assembly Council in making these decisions, and these include my friends, but are they aware of the direction in which these moves are taking us? Perhaps they are, but are we content with these decisions?"

I feel there is agreement that the Presbyterian Church in Canada is in serious membership decline and that adjustments are needed to compensate for reduced financial resources. At the same time we need to provide extra financial and human resources to help rejuvenate our church.

What recommendations does Kouwenberg have for how the PCC should best deal with the dichotomy of having substantially reduced finances available (because of declining numbers), while needing increased financial and human resources to help our congregations and presbyteries revitalize, grow, and better serve

Letters



write to us

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God and the congregations and communities they serve?

BILL ASHBY, ONLINE,
COLDWATER, ONT.

Dr. Kouwenberg replies online:

Thanks for your comments, Bill.

While I'm a big supporter of all of the work of the Presbyterian Church in Canada—after all, it has provided me and my family with a wonderful church home and with many opportunities for local, regional and national service—you will see ➤

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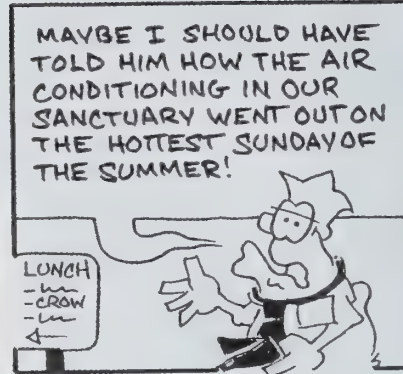
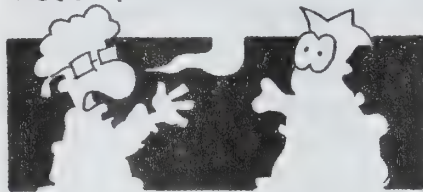
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that I have a special passion for the development of the local church.

Thus I believe, if finances at the national level are declining, why not balance the appointment of staff for church development issues with the provision and deployment of staff for

social and justice issues?

Even more, if we have no real strategy (as I think is the case) for building up the church and increasing its membership, then perhaps we need to rethink where we marshal our resources and “bulk up” where the need is greatest. Maybe we need more, not fewer people dedicated at 50 Wynford Drive to praying and planning how we might reach the next generation for Christ. (Do we even know enough about who and what this generation wants and needs?)

I really believe the LMA needs to take the decline of church attendance (without speaking of membership) more seriously. An extensive report prepared and presented to the General Assembly by Jim Czegledi, then an associate secretary of the LMA, some years ago on this very topic received scant attention and virtually no discussion. Why?

The LMA needs to do far more thinking and planning about ways and means to make a difference to this trend. Any business worth its salt takes a hard look at the direction the graphs are trending and attempts to think about how the slide may be reversed, or they're toast. I know at least one Christian denomination in B.C. that has done that—all new church plants must be “seeker sensitive.” Also in Abbotsford, where I minister, there are many innovative ways of doing church, including liturgical, traditional

and contemporary expressions of the faith. Surely, there are any number of ways we can do this while retaining our preferred “ancient-contemporary” (Robert Webber) balance of worship and witness.

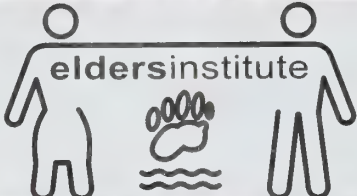
My experience at General Assemblies—many of which I have attended and whose reports we can read in the Acts and Proceedings—is that the stories of social and justice issues are frequently and well told. What about the stories of new faith, new church, and new church development? Let the LMA make sure that more of these stories are shared.

And for those who may be struggling, let's share more gifted, skilled and experienced people who can embody some of the changes we need, as well as resources that may help. (I know the Vine seeks to do this, but they are truly limited in the number of people who can answer questions knowledgeably and are free to actually go out to any given congregation and/or presbytery and provide tangible help.)

Let's pay more attention to providing more resources to consider more thoroughly in what ways we can and must attract people who are spiritually hungry, even as we seek to form each other as Christians who will continue to express their faith in a Reformed and Presbyterian manner.

I know it isn't simple, and I know it cannot be simplistic. We don't need

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to be "market-driven." Just paying lip service to the word "evangelism" or coming up with a few "tricks of the trade" will not get us there. It will take constant and thorough, ground-breaking work. But, somebody needs to be tasked to do this.

HANS KOUWENBERG, ONLINE
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Upon reflection, Mr. Ashby, who is both a member of the LMA committee and a representative elder to presbytery, wrote the following to our managing editor:

The answer: Through prayer, communication and action.

The question: How can the PCC go forward in a way that will better serve God, its congregants and communities?

The question is straightforward. The answer is very complex.

Many very good ideas came out of the Emmaus conference held last year. One of the prevailing conclusions was that we need to put more financial and human resources at the grassroots level of our church, namely, presbytery. How this can be best done is a topic that needs further discussion collectively, at all levels of the PCC.

But more than that, I feel we all need to consider what we can do personally to help our church go forward and each of us should truthfully answer the following questions:

1. Do I personally, with regularity, pray for guidance from God for our church and our leaders?

2. Am I fully engaged to the best of my ability in supporting my church financially? Do I get personally involved with church committees and support church events?

3. Do I share my ideas and concerns with my minister and elder?

4. If I am an elder, do I communicate with my district and bring their ideas and concerns before session?

5. As a minister, do I effectively communicate information to my congregation about activities,

programs and literature that will equip them to meet future challenges?

6. Do I attend presbytery meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences to hear what is being discussed and when appropriate offer my input?

7. If I am a member of presbytery, do I take an active role in important committee work?

8. Can I find ways to become involved in national committee work and say yes if asked to participate?

Our church is based on a collective sharing of faith, human and financial resources to best serve God, our congregations and the communities we serve. Are we as individuals acting in a way that we can truthfully say, "we are trying our best?"

Stay Strong

Re Ultimate Destination, online

Good morning, Pat Schneider. Writing about your journey with Harry's cancer will help many who read it, I'm sure. It was a very sad time in your life, and many of us have had life and death experiences in our families and friends so can readily relate to yours. God will continue to bless you along the way, keeping you spiritually strong in all your endeavours.

JANET OPHUS, ONLINE

Correction:

A news story in the February issue misspelled the name of the new Beacan Presbyterian Church. The unique spelling of the name was chosen to reflect both Beaverton and Cannington, the two congregations that amalgamated to form Beacan. ■

online extra

AS ALWAYS, LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED SO MORE VOICES CAN BE SHARED. THE COMPLETE TEXT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT **PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA**.



Evangel Hall Mission

Volunteers Needed for Sunday Dinners

This summer Evangel Hall Mission needs your help.

We are looking for willing groups of 6 to 12 volunteers to provide home cooked meals and serve approximately 75 to 100 people. Dinner is served at 5:30 p.m. and volunteer groups are invited to create their own menus. The meal does not have to be complicated, sheppard's pie and lasagna are quite popular, and if cooking is not your forte, we have two large barbeques available for hot dogs and hamburgers. Meals can be prepared off site in the comfort of your own kitchen or here at the Hall, whichever is more convenient for you.

Evangel Hall Mission represents extended family for many of our participants. The Sunday dinners Program is not only an opportunity to provide hot nutritious meals for members of our community less fortunate than ourselves but also a chance to let others know that they are appreciated and cared for.

For more information on this program or to have your group host a Sunday dinner, please Contact Jo Ann Hislop (416) 504-3563 x 222.

**"Everybody can be great.
Because anybody can serve...
You only need a heart full of
grace. A soul generated by love."**

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Kingdom Building

ASK ME ABOUT MY CHURCH. BY KIRK MACLEOD

Dec. 12th could not come quickly enough. Finally, our Ask Me About My Church campaign began. It involved seven of the nine churches in Keswick, Ont., with an average of roughly half of the membership putting a sign on their property. My hope at the beginning was really twofold: to spark faith conversations, and to unite the churches of Keswick in one common goal that I call Kingdom building. You see, it's easy sometimes to become concerned with just our own church, our own little small kingdom, especially in a declining denomination. I was no exception because with a new building and a big mortgage I could sense us becoming more inward looking.

So I began to reconnect with the pastors in my community; three of them gather for breakfast on a regular basis. Just before the campaign started, at one of these gatherings a colleague asked, "What wins do you hope to see from this outreach?" Wins? I knew what he meant but sometimes such language makes me a little uncomfortable. But it got me thinking. What 'wins' do I want to see?

Is it simply about numerical growth for the participating churches or the number of conversions or baptisms that could occur in churches that participate in the campaign? Secretly I hoped our own church might see some immediate growth because we stepped out in faith.

Maybe such stories would make their way to the Facebook site I set up, but, to be honest, those good news stories didn't flood my wall. That's not to say I didn't receive some feedback, especially from my breakfast buddies.



IT GOT ME THINKING.
WHAT 'WINS' DO
I WANT TO SEE?

One pastor told me a story about neighbours who live directly across the street from one another and worshipped at two different churches. As one of the neighbours put his sign up, the other neighbour watched. The one installing his sign yelled, "Where is your sign?" The other sheepishly responded, "Oh, yeah I almost forgot."

Still another colleague mentioned that someone from his church was actually asked about her church by a neighbour. There are other similar stories, but are those the kind of wins I was hoping for? Then I had an unexpected win myself.

During this campaign, our church lost a family. They were a great young couple with two wonderful little boys. Mom and Dad were part of our small groups and most recently the Dad started a much-needed senior high youth group that was even growing!

For the past three years, this young family had been commuting 40 minutes to church. But recently, a new church plant—not Presbyterian—

started in their community. Mom is now involved in a small group again and participating in Moms and Tots. And Dad hopes to get as involved as he used to be in our church. They really didn't want to leave our congregation but our leadership knew this was the best thing for them, and for the Church.

So maybe there is a third purpose for this outreach along with uniting the church and sparking spiritual dialogue, and it is about changing the minds, hearts and attitudes of those who participate. Those changes can be small but significant; changes like having the courage to simply "advertise" that we are followers of Christ, knowing how to express our faith if asked, or praying that God would help get the conversation rolling.

If this campaign has taught me anything, it's that Ask Me About My Church really means, "Ask me about Christ's Church." I hope the same things will happen this Easter as signs again go up in Keswick and maybe even in your community. We may have lost a family over Christmas, but God's church won! And isn't that what Kingdom building is all about? ■

Rev. Kirk MacLeod is co-minister with his wife, Allyson at Keswick, Ont. He extends a challenge to all churches to start the Ask Me About My Church campaign in their community this Easter. All you need is the collective will and a lawn sign like the one on this page. MacLeod can be found through the Blue Book, at askmeaboutmychurch.com or on Facebook (keywords: ask me about my church). He will report again next month about what happened in Keswick during and after the Easter campaign. Andrew Faiz will return in May.



Rev. Sameh Hanna, a Presbyterian minister currently serving a church in Cairo, Egypt, led a prayer and worship service in the midst of the anti-government protests in Tahrir Square. Hanna is seen here (centre) with two Muslim Imams. Both Christians and Muslims thanked him for his words on justice and peace.

In the Midst of Change

A PRESBYTERIAN IN EGYPT PRAYS FOR PEACE. **BY AMY MACLACHLAN**

THOUGH PROTESTS IN EGYPT have ended, President Hosni Mubarak has stepped down from his post, and free and democratic elections have been promised by the interim-ruling army for September, the story in the Middle East's most populous Arab nation is far from over. And Presbyterian minister, Rev. Sameh Hanna, senior associate pastor at Kasr El Dohara Evangelical Church in Cairo, has had a front row seat as it all unfolds.

Hanna's church is located at Tahrir Square, where the anti-government protests broke out on Jan. 25 and stretched on for 18 days. Due to the sometimes hundreds of thousands of people invading the square and the curfew imposed on the city, the church was forced to close its doors for the duration of the protest.

But Egyptian-born Hanna, now back in his native country after coming to Toronto in 1998 and beginning the

Arabic Outreach Ministry under the Presbytery of East Toronto, felt called to take part in the demonstrations by leading a worship service in Tahrir Square on the Sunday before Mubarak resigned in early February.

"It was amazing," Hanna told the *Record* in an interview from Cairo. "Imams and Muslim scholars gathered around me and hugged and thanked me for my encouraging words. I spoke about justice and asked Jesus to ➤



Nearly one million people protest in Tahrir Square; inset: Ihab El Kharat, a church elder, leads prayers during the demonstrations.

provide justice and freedom from sin and oppression. We sang songs and asked for blessings for this country and for unity among the nations—among Christians, Muslims, and those for and against Mubarak.”

He noted that both Christians and Muslims gathered around him, protecting him from fanatics who may have been in the crowd, saying it was “something unique.”

“I believe the church has to be incarnate in the community. What they [the protesters] are asking for—justice—is biblical. They’re asking for freedom, which is biblical. For equality. Maybe we have different opinions on how to implement these things, but principles are principles. And we agreed on those principles.”

Hanna says his church is the largest Arabic Presbyterian congregation in the world with about 7,800 members. “Though we are serving millions through TV and web streaming. We are having a great impact in the Middle East and North America.”

Despite the church’s temporary closing, the congregation continued its service, cleaning Cairo’s streets, praying for unity (meeting daily for three hours in homes), and distributing food to poor areas of the city. And when they were able to re-open the church doors, they held a celebration on Feb.

15. Nearly 10,000 people attended, including many Muslims. “It was an amazing event,” said Hanna, via email. “People felt the church was part of the community.”

But while Christians are hoping for a religiously liberal president, some are worried that Mubarak’s three-decade rule (and considerably moderate take on the Muslim faith), will be replaced by a strict and conservative Muslim leader, making the plight of Egypt’s Christians even more precarious.

William Khalil is the lay missionary at Almanarah, London, Ont., one of the Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Arabic-speaking congregations. He is Egyptian-born and raised, though claims a Presbyterian heritage—his father is a Presbyterian elder in Egypt and his grandfather was a minister. Khalil told the *Record* his congregation has hope for Egypt, but they are worried nonetheless.

“Christians are even more scared now. There are a lot of parties fighting to take control. Mubarak is a moderate Muslim, so there is concern that an extremist will take control, and that will put churches in a difficult situation. So our prayers right now are to see a new president taking and following the path with Christians. We hope that happens in the very close future.”

Rev. Sherif Garas of Almanarah, Mississauga, Ont., said his congregation has been praying for Egypt’s freedom from religious oppression, and for the safety of loved ones still living there. They hold two meetings a week to pray for Egypt, and congregation members are encouraged to pray at 9:00 nightly for the same.

Still, Hanna remains optimistic. He believes the protests have done more than oust a president—they have helped Egypt move closer to being a welcoming nation to all.

“I think Egypt is entering a new era of freedom and justice,” he said. “Egypt will not go back to the way it was before Jan. 25 ... It has brought back the love for this country. Together, we’re taking care of the country, of each other. And over the last few days, we don’t hear ‘Muslim’ and ‘Christian.’ We used to hear it every day; now I hear ‘Egypt’ and ‘Egyptian.’ The protestors keep repeating, ‘Don’t play this game anymore. Muslim or Christian, it doesn’t matter. We are one nation.’”

Hanna is looking forward to the day when Christians enjoy more rights. Under current law, if Christians want to build a church, they need the president’s signature. “That’s not acceptable,” said Hanna. “But under the new government, we hope we can build when we want, and worship how we want, so it will open the door to convert to Christianity.”

He acknowledges that ultra-conservative groups like the Muslim Brotherhood will get some votes in the next election, but doesn’t think they will receive the majority of support.

“I am encouraging people right now in my sermons to pray for freedom and am encouraging them to be positive and good citizens, which means you believe this to start with yourself, and to be active in your community. When it’s election time, we will go and vote. We have to practice this freedom.” ■

Amy MacLachlan is the *Record*’s senior writer.

Community News

Vancouver Group Calls for Rights for Migrant Workers

MIGRANT WORKERS WERE NOT forgotten by a Vancouver human rights group that held a "vigil for the silenced" on Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, 2010.

The group, dubbed the Coalition for Migrant Workers' Justice, was born with the support of the local Kairos committee, and is backed by a number of churches and other associations devoted to workers' rights.

Janette McIntosh, a member of West Point Grey, Vancouver, Kairos Vancouver and the coalition, called attention to a November 2010 report from the UN International Labour Organization, which ruled that Canada and Ontario violated the rights of more than 100,000 farm workers when it barred them from forming unions. According to the United Nations, Ontario's Agricultural Employees Act of 2002 violates two UN conventions—convention 87, which calls for freedom of association and protection of the right to organize, and convention 98, which guarantees a right to organize and collectively bargain.

The vigil brought together members from Kairos Vancouver, as well as churches and numerous human rights and labour groups. ■—C.Purvis

Honouring a Man of Peace

ERNIE REGEHR HAS SPENT a lifetime working toward disarmament and an end to violent conflicts around the globe. On Jan. 21, he was awarded the prestigious Pearson Peace Medal, which recognizes outstanding Canadians who have made personal contributions to peace and social justice.

Governor General David Johnston presented the prize, calling Regehr a "worthy heir" to Lester Pearson and



A Dec. 10, 2010 vigil organized by Vancouver-based Coalition for Migrant Workers' Justice.

the 25 laureates who preceded him, the most recent of whom was Romeo Dallaire in 2004.

In 1976, Regehr co-founded Project Ploughshares, hoping to spur nuclear disarmament and an end to large transfers of arms to the developing world. Today, the ecumenical peace centre, which is backed by the Canadian Council of Churches, continues to strive for peaceful resolutions to conflicts, and limited, controlled use and trade of weapons.

Although Regehr has retired from his work with Project Ploughshares, he remains a research fellow at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at Conrad Grebel University College, a Mennonite college affiliated with the University of Waterloo, and a fellow of the Simons Foundation of Vancouver, which promotes education in peace, disarmament, international law and human security. He continues to write and research, and keeps up a long-running blog at disarmingconflict.ca. He also received a high honour in

2003, when he was made an officer of the Order of Canada.

Regehr was also the recipient of the Presbyterian Church's E.H. Johnson award for mission in 2007. ■—C.Purvis

2010 Sharing Drops

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE church's national mission and ministry fund dropped four per cent in 2010, bringing the fund's year-end total to the lowest levels seen in two decades.

Presbyterians Sharing received \$8.15 million from congregations and individuals in 2010, down \$360,000 from 2009.

Until September, contributions were tracking at levels similar to 2009, noted Karen Plater, associate secretary of Stewardship. Most congregations accept a voluntary allocation to Presbyterians Sharing early in the year, and many submit the funds as monthly installments. But some wait until the end of the year to contribute a lump sum. In October it became clear contributions would probably be ➤

'I think there will be a tipping point and Presbyterians Sharing will enter a steady decline'

down about four per cent compared to the previous year, she said.

Overall donations to the fund grew during the 1990s and stabilized around the \$8.7 million mark in the early 2000s. But between 2006 and 2010, contributions have fallen about seven per cent in total.

Although many factors may have contributed to congregations' reductions, including impact from the economic downturn, building projects and cash-flow problems, declining membership and increasing church costs likely had the greatest effects.

"In the 1980s we had a net loss of about 10,000 members," observed Rev. Peter Coutts, who has compiled and analyzed church statistics, and was part of a task force that prepared a demographic study of the PCC for the 2001 General Assembly. "In the 1990s we had a net loss of about 20,000 members. In the 2000s we had a net loss of about 30,000 members. Our membership as of Dec. 31, 2010 will

have been around 105,000. We can anticipate a net loss of about 40,000 members in the coming decade.

"I think there will be a tipping point and Presbyterians Sharing will enter a steady decline. Congregations wishing to maintain their financial status quo will be forced to make hard choices regarding their budgets and many will be inclined to find cost savings in part, or in whole, at the expense of Presbyterians Sharing. In 2009 the total income for congregations declined 2.3 per cent compared to the previous year. The response? Congregations adjusted their budgets in 2010 and reduced their support for Presbyterians Sharing."

But it is still too early to say if the church has reached a financial tipping point, both Plater and Coutts said. It will take a few more years to determine whether the data forms a trend.

"I think when you look at how Presbyterians Sharing has declined, all you see is a bad news story," said Plater. "But when you see what congregations have given to charities, to supporting ministers and buildings, to the pension fund, their presbyteries, Presbyterian World Service and Development ... That's what still excites me about the work of the church." ■ —C.Purvis

Women's Gathering Add-Ons

THE PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S Gathering, hosted by the Atlantic Mission Society and Women's Missionary Society, is drawing closer. As of February, 469 people were registered

for the May long-weekend event. In addition to keynote speaker Dr. Margaret Somerville, several new things are on the program, including guest speaker Stevie Cameron, an award-winning Canadian investigative journalist, best-selling author, and Presbyterian woman, who will speak on the night of the banquet dinner.

The event, which will take place May 20-23 in Richmond Hill, Ont., will feature numerous entertainment options including a Toronto city tour, dinner and music at Vaughan Community Church where traditional Korean food will be served, dinner and program at St. James, Stouffville, and an evening of entertainment at the hotel including musical group, The Lost Pilgrims.

There will also be a special gathering for young women on opening night. Participants can log onto the event's Facebook page (keywords: Presbyterian Women's Gathering) for updates. Registration closes March 31. ■ —AM

Guildwood Gives \$25,000

"WE'RE THRILLED," said Rev. Hugh Donnelly of Guildwood Community in Toronto. "At first we knew it was an ambitious project."

As the church prepared to celebrate its 50th anniversary throughout 2010, its leaders decided they would set a lofty mission goal: by the end of the year, they aimed to raise \$25,000 to build three wells in Malawi under the auspices of Presbyterian World >

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"We were prepared to go into the 2011 calendar year and make it a year and a half project," Donnelly said. But there was no need. By mid-November the congregation had met its goal, and funds continued to come in.

Creative fundraising initiatives included gathering small change, "turning wine into water" by donating refunds from the return of wine and beer bottles, and Sunday school children offering the contents of their piggy banks by dumping them into a wooden well. And it included more unique methods, such as one member who ran Zumba workout classes and donated a portion of the proceeds. An endowment left to the church for mission was used to match donations dollar for dollar. And each donor had a chance to win a quilt made by a member of the church.

"The congregation always comes through for mission," Donnelly said. "It's a passion and people just rally." ■
—C.Purvis

New Missionaries to Malawi

TWO NEW missionary couples have been appointed to Malawi.

Rev. Mike and Debbie Burns set out for Blantyre, the capital of the country's southern province, on Feb. 7. Mike will serve as associate minister at the historic St. Michael and All Angels' Church. Missionary couple Rev. Ed and Jackie Hoekstra will return to Canada in June after three years in Malawi. Ed has been serving as associate minister at St. Columba, another prominent church in Blantyre.

Rev. Todd Statham, who will be awarded his doctorate in May, and his wife Annika Voeltz headed to the African nation from Germany on Feb. 18. Statham will be a lecturer in church history and theology at Zomba Theological College. ■ —C.Purvis

CFGB: Unstable Food Prices Risky for Farmers

RISING FOOD PRICES MAY be a mixture of blessing and curse for the world's

Malawian Minister Hopes to Reconnect with Canadian Colleagues

IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH International Ministries, Malawi's minister of health has thanked the Presbyterian Church for training him, and expressed a desire to reconnect with students and professors with whom he studied in Montreal.

Rev. Prof. David Mphande received financial support from the Board of World Missions—a predecessor to the Life and Mission Agency—to study at Presbyterian College, McGill University, from 1977

until 1980. Armed with bachelor of theology and master of sacred music degrees, he returned to Malawi and served many years as minister in Livingstonia Synod, in the country's northern province. He eventually retired from the ministry and entered politics; he now serves as minister of health.

Old classmates and professors can contact Mphande by email at davidmphande@gmail.com. ■

—with files from International Ministries

poor according to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's senior policy advisor.

Although higher food costs burden poor consumers, they can help small farmers; higher food prices can mean larger profits for producers, and larger profits can create more employment as farmers increase production and hire

record and the sixth consecutive rise in price.

According to Clark, who also heads CFGB's food task force, what is needed is a way to even out prices—balancing farmers' need to receive a fair return for their commodities with consumers' ability to purchase them. Stable food

**'Canada has a strong reason,
and a good opportunity, to
support moves that ensure reliable
global food supplies at predictable prices'**

more workers, noted Stuart Clark. But such production increases can also be risky if the prices don't last.

Sudden rises in food prices, such as those happening now, "only add to the risks for poor farmers, especially if prices drop rapidly, as they did in 2008," Clark said in a press release.

According to a report from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, prices for commodities like meat, dairy and cereal grains increased four per cent in December 2010, the highest monthly increase on

prices could also benefit developed nations, allowing producers to better estimate their expected returns.

In June, G20 agriculture ministers will meet in Paris to address this problem. "As a major exporter, Canada has a strong reason, and a good opportunity, to support moves that ensure reliable global food supplies at predictable prices," Clark said. "At the same time, Canada would also be contributing to reducing the threat of increasing hunger, something all Canadians would support." ■ —CFGB

World News

After the Floods in Australia

PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS in Queensland, Australia are helping their surrounding communities rebuild their lives after major flooding hit the north-east part of the continent in January.

Churches are helping seniors' centres clean up and care for residents; are providing childcare facilities for families trying to clean up their homes, food packages to those in need, and snacks for clean-up teams; are assisting local businesses suffering major flood damage; and ministering to those who have lost loved ones, and praying for the safe return of individuals who went missing in the floods.

Massive flooding in Queensland left 30 people dead, as of Jan. 19, according to the Australia Broadcasting Corporation. It is estimated that the flooding has caused billions of dollars in damage.

Following the record-breaking floods, Tropical Cyclone Yasi brought heavy wind and more rain in February. ■
—with files from Creek Road Presbyterian Church, Australia

Gay Activist's Murder Sparks Cries for Tolerance

OVER 70 RELIGIOUS representatives and 25 organizations have issued a statement in response to the violent death of David Kato in Uganda, calling on religious leaders "to speak, act and urge their faithful to reach out in compassion towards those who are marginalized for any reason and to resist all attempts to promote intolerance and hatred."

David Kato was beaten to death in his home in Kampala in January. The official investigation is ongoing, with police in Uganda saying the motive was robbery. His death, however, has highlighted the discrimination and violence faced by sexual minorities in Uganda and elsewhere.

Kato was a leading human rights activist in Uganda, who had recently

Kato's death highlights the discrimination and violence facing sexual minorities in Uganda and elsewhere

won a court case against a Ugandan newspaper for publishing his photo, name and address, along with those of other gay people, with the caption, "Hang Them." In Uganda, homosexuality is illegal and an anti-homosexuality bill introduced last year called for imposing life imprisonment for homosexual activity, and the death penalty in some cases.

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, of which the Presbyterian Church is a member, prepared the statement calling on "all governmental, civil and religious authorities in Uganda and

around the world to speak out against hate, stigma and discrimination, and instead, in words and deeds, recognize and promote the essential worth and dignity of every person." ■

—*Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance*

Churches Closing in Sudan

SOME CHURCHES, PARISHES, religious and church schools in northern Sudan are closing due to a large movement of people to the south after the independence referendum, according to some church leaders.

In the referendum, held in mid-January, voters in southern Sudan overwhelmingly approved independence for their region, the site of two long civil wars. The area is expected to become independent in July.

Roman Catholic Bishop Daniel Adwok, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Khartoum Archdiocese, said the closures were occurring after people who had settled in a northern area during the conflict travelled voluntarily and en masse to the south, with more movement expected.

Although many of the Christians are said to have returned to the south voluntarily, some observers said they had departed because they could not be assured of their safety. Church leaders are concerned that if the Muslim government in the north adopts strict Sharia law, as it has promised, the church will suffer. ■ —*ENI*

A Tenuous Position in Pakistan

AS PAKISTAN'S MAIN CHURCHES held special prayers in memory of Salman Taseer, the governor assassinated for his opposition to a law that punishes insult to Islam by death, Christians in Pakistan spoke about being in a precarious position in their own country.

"Religion in our country has always been a sensitive issue but after the

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brutal killing of Salman Taseer, we as a minority group feel that the less we talk, the better it is," said Amna Ayaz, a teacher.

Ayaz spoke with *ENInews* at Lahore Cathedral where on Jan. 16, worshippers and members of civil society gathered in memory of Taseer and to counter rising extremism in Muslim-majority Pakistan. Taseer, who was killed on Jan. 4 by one of his security guards, was calling for a review of the blasphemy law after a Christian woman, Asia Bibi, was sentenced to death. Taseer had visited Bibi, who is still in prison.

Bishop John Alexander Malik said, "We condemn the assassination of governor Taseer who fought for the rights of minorities in Pakistan. It seems that raising voices against extremism is getting harder."

■—*ENI*

Justice for Egypt's Christians

THE SENTENCING TO DEATH of a Muslim man in connection with an attack in 2010 that killed six Coptic Christians and a Muslim police officer is seen as being particularly significant for Egypt's Christians and a marked difference from previous responses to attacks on Copts.

"A decision on this case is long overdue, and while Christian Solidarity Worldwide values the court's pursuit of justice for the victims, CSW does not condone the death penalty for any crime," said Mervyn Thomas, chief executive of CSW.

Mohamed Ahmed Hussein was sentenced to death on Jan. 16 by an Egyptian court for the shooting deaths following a New Year's mass in January 2010. The court said the sentence would be sent to the Grand Mufti, Egypt's top religious authority, which is called on to confirm death sentences. Hussein's two alleged accomplices were charged with aiding in the murders; their sentences were scheduled to be announced on Feb. 20. ■—*ENI*

The Other Six Days Internet Amusements

FOOD, BEER AND PET
PROTECTION—CHRISTIAN-STYLE. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

LIFEHOUSE'S EVERYTHING SKIT

Though the band has repeatedly rejected being labeled a "Christian band," Lifehouse's lead singer Jason Wade and bassist Sergio Andrade met at Vineyard Church in California, where both were involved in the church's youth group and worship team. They're one of those strangely popular bands with extremely strong Christian overtones. It's no wonder then that many churches use their music, including this dramatic skit making the rounds at mega-churches everywhere.

FIND IT @ youtube.com. Search for "Lifehouse skit."

ONLINE COOKING SHOW

Father Leo Patalinghug is an interesting man. He is an author. He is a nationally recognized champion of Arnis (full-contact stick fighting), and he holds a black belt in tae kwon do. But his real passion is blending faith and food. *Grace Before Meals* is an online cooking show hosted by Father Patalinghug, a Philippines-born Catholic priest.

FIND IT @ gracebeforemeals.com.

COMEDY

Tim Hawkins is a Christian comedian. His comedy is generally music-oriented, and he is in fact a singer-songwriter as well as a comedian. Perhaps most well known for his parody of Carrie Underwood's *Jesus Take the Wheel*, Hawkins has three CDs and four DVDs and is worth a look for a good laugh. Fifty million youtube fans are rarely wrong.

FIND IT @ youtube.com. Search for "Tim Hawkins my favourite Bible verse."

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Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

Welcome, Neighbour!

AN INVITATION EXTENDED AND A FRIENDSHIP MADE. BY KENNETH STRIGHT



Shelley MacDonald-Parsons (left), convener of the mission and outreach committee at the Church of St. David, Halifax, presents a cheque to the Halifax Refugee Clinic to help refugees just arriving in Canada. A portion of the gift was used to secure an apartment for a client. Also pictured are (centre) Gillian Zubizarreta, settlement coordinator, and (right) Julie Chamagne, executive director.

IT'S ALWAYS NICE to greet the new neighbour who moves in almost next door. When you are a church and it is an organization that has just moved in, it is a little harder. When that organization is the Halifax Refugee Clinic, all kinds of things are possible. For us at

the Church of St. David, Halifax, all it took was a church member dropping in to say, "hi!" and "what is it exactly that you do here?" and the relationship was off and running.

When that church member is also part of the mission and outreach

committee even more can happen. So at the next meeting of the M and O committee, Kathy asked the group, "Guess who I just met?" The committee was hooked!

It didn't take long for an invitation to cross the street from the church to the clinic: "Come and visit and tell us more about yourself." And a friendship was made!

That first meeting was an exchange; a time to learn and share and to understand one another. The Halifax Refugee Clinic is unlike most organizations that deal with people coming to Canada. The clients they serve are not government-sponsored folk who simply need to navigate 'the system' and find themselves a new home. The clinic does not receive government money, and relies on benefactors and individuals. These folk fall between the cracks in the system and often arrive with no place



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Communications Office
The Presbyterian Church in Canada 

to stay, no sponsors, no contacts and a whole lot of fear that they won't be allowed to stay.

The clinic provides legal and settlement services and the everyday kind of help people from around the world need in a new country. The people they serve meet the criteria for a refugee because they have "a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion" and are "living outside their country of origin and, because of fear, are unable or unwilling to return."

And getting to Canada is only part of the solution. "Canada's refugee system is broken, with unacceptably long delays to determine whether someone

descended on the city.

The cheque presented to the clinic will not last long but it will make a difference. When Shelley MacDonald-Parsons, convener of the mission committee, and I went to the clinic to present the cheque, we heard of other ways the church could get involved in the life of the clinic, and how clients of the clinic could get involved in the life of the congregation.

St. David's doors are open to street people and volunteers are always needed. Clients of the clinic can't seek out employment while their cases are being heard so any opportunity to engage in the life of the city is welcome.

The opportunity to volunteer is one of the few things open to them; therefore, volunteering at the church was a great idea. Likewise, congregation members were warmly welcomed to the workshops and information evenings hosted by the clinic. The relationship is already growing.

Leaving the clinic, Shelley and I had the opportunity to talk with one of the people from Botswana: "We'd like to introduce ourselves..." And another contact and another relationship has the potential to be born! ■

Rev. Kenneth Stright is minister at the Church of St. David, Halifax.

**Let's do what
Presbyterians do
best. Let's have a
potluck and offer
financial assistance to a
group that doesn't
get government
backing**

is a legitimate refugee," according to Immigration Minister Jason Kenney.

How can we be good neighbours to such a clinic? The mission and outreach folk are a creative bunch so they began with information—let's tell people about this place! And then, are there practical ways to be neighbours? Let's do what Presbyterians do best. Let's have a potluck and offer financial assistance to a group that doesn't get government backing. A quick soup after service raised well over \$500 to be used for the contingency funds of the groups—two women and a four-year-old had just arrived from southern Africa and needed everything to survive the late January blast of icy air that had

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Letter from India



A Strong Bond

A DECADES-LONG PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES TO BEAR FRUIT IN JOBAT. BY GUY SMAGGHE



Guy Smaghe with a community health nurse in Mendha.

JOBAT IS A welcoming and peaceful place. By the time Presbyterian World Service and Development committee member, Rev. Laura Kavanagh, Presbyterian missionary, Michelle Verwey and I arrived at Jobat Hospital last September, it was already evening, but we were greeted warmly by a large number of hospital staff and local friends. One of our first tasks was to fill out a form for the local police so they know who is present in the area—three copies done with carbon paper. I like to think it was for our safety.

Every time I visit Jobat, one of the highlights is the privilege of spending time with Pauline Brown. Jobat and Pauline Brown are well-known names in our constituency. Ms. Brown, as people call her here, arrived in India 60 years ago to contribute her nursing skills to people living in the tribal areas. Although she retired in 2006, she still lives in her house by the hospital. In 2000, Ms. Brown was chosen to be a

Member of the Order of Canada due to her service in Jobat. Although Ms. Brown was in Canada during the time of our visit, we could see the impact of her life and work.

We visited the Helen McConnell Nursing School where Ms. Brown was the first principal. The school has over 20 young women in their first year of nursing studies. One of the teachers is an alumna. The girls stay in the residence located within the hospital and school compound. In our discussions with the current principal, Mrs. Arthur, we were pleased to discover that the funds sent for nursing scholarships through PWS&D are providing girls from the poorest families in the surrounding villages with the opportunity for a nursing career.

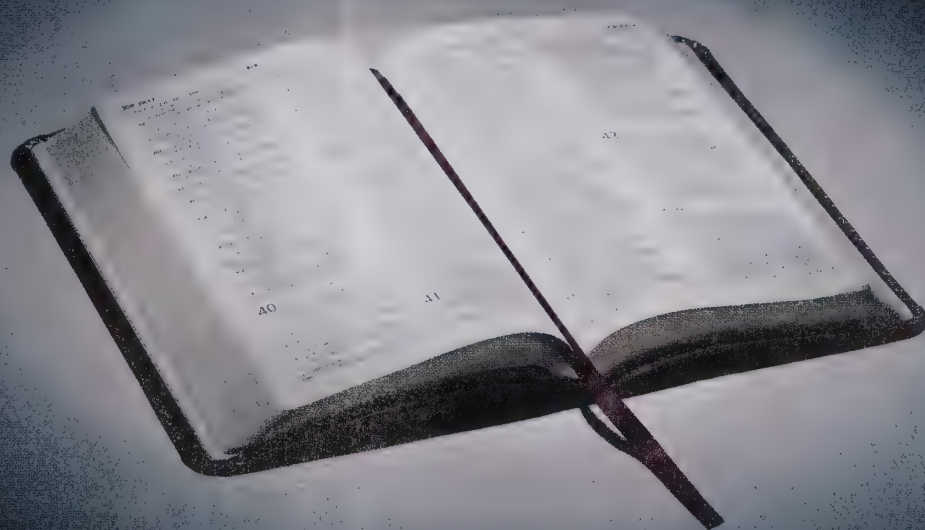
In the hallway, the photos of the graduating classes are displayed. We found Ms. Brown's photo, along with that of Mercy Ravikant. After graduating, Mercy worked in the community

health programs linked to the Jobat Hospital. She became the leader of the program in Mendha, about an hour away from Jobat, which reaches out to 70 villages. Thanks to these programs, maternal mortality has dropped dramatically, children are cleaner and better fed, and youngsters get immunized against diseases. The next challenge is to replicate the program in new villages where the health conditions are comparatively poor, and help people access local government programs to improve their lives.

To be a Christian in Jobat can be a challenge at times, but people generally live together peacefully. Now a new generation of nurses is emerging. Our missionary, Michelle Verwey is teaching at the nursing institute in Indore, helping nurses become leaders and acquire community health expertise.

As we left Jobat, we saw the future with hope: new villages will be added to our program, a new hostel is about to be built for the Christian school (thanks to the Women's Missionary Society), the nursing school will admit another batch of students in a few months, and the hospital's critical care unit will soon be staffed. For this dynamic and vibrant partnership we give thanks to the decades of service by mission staff of the PCC, the commitment and service of Christians in Jobat, and the willingness of Canadian Presbyterians to support this relationship with prayers and offerings to Presbyterians Sharing and PWS&D. In this place, I can feel the strong bond between Canada and India, in its most humble and genuine form. ■

Guy Smaghe is senior program coordinator at PWS&D.



PART ONE

Fundamentalists by Default

THE LAITY HAVE LOST THE TOOLS TO READ
THE GOSPEL AS WITNESS AND ARGUMENT.

BY JOSEPH MCLELLAND

So the younger
generations don't
attend church?

Maybe that's because they see the church as the "new atheists" charge, having blind faith, which is often articulated in these terms:

- An all-powerful deity controls every-

thing, even calamities and evils—which he could eliminate but chooses not to for inscrutable reasons. He once drowned everyone on earth, except for a family of eight, as punishment for sin.

- Jesus was God on earth, performing miracles (such as walking on water) to show his divine power.
- As the glorified Christ he now rules

the world (despite appearances), but only Christians are destined for heaven.

- His church is triumphant and militant; its mission is to convert everyone, regardless of their quality of faith—Jew or Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist—into Christians.

Such matters are learned uncritically and stick in the popular ➤

The original meaning of belief was trusting yourself completely to someone. 'Believing' was akin to the old word 'beloving'—an active way of life rather than right doctrine

mind, reinforced by the strident fundamentalism of televangelists. I think there are two reasons for this distortion. One is the shift in the meaning of "faith," the other is lack of biblical interpretation.

What does "faith" mean? We must distinguish it from "belief." The modern meaning of having faith is "believing certain things to be true." The stress falls on creeds, a series of affirmations to which we give credence. But this is a very modern way of thinking. The 18th-century Enlightenment made everything intellectual and rational, including belief. Hence the search for proofs of divine existence, something the Bible never thought of. To determine one's faith by beliefs is an appeal to reason—principal Walter Bryden of Knox College, Toronto, used to lament the ascendancy of what he called "rational orthodoxy."

The original meaning of belief was trusting yourself completely to someone. "Believing" was akin to the old word "beloving"—an active way of life rather than right doctrine. What came first was not articles of faith but

discipleship. This did not necessarily involve the heavy Christology of the great creeds of the first six centuries—indeed creeds were not to be taken literally, as we tend to now (you didn't sign them, you sang them).

Classical theology acknowledged that we can't know much about God, whose essence is hidden, incomprehensible (a favourite term) to mere human intellects. Augustine: "If you understand it, it's not God."

The Bible's many names for God are similes or metaphors—God is like a shepherd, a rock, a father, a mother, etc. Each name must be qualified to get at the higher truth it signifies. The positive alone tends to idolize God, turning names into real attributes.

God is greater than we can conceive and the Bible's names help us rise above everything earthly to meditate on the transcendent Mystery.

"God" has many names but, beyond them all, remains anonymous. The privileged name in the New Testament is that of Jesus the Christ, and even that is subordinate to God (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:28). And exactly just how Jesus fulfilled the messianic role was open to various interpretations in the early church, before the creeds solidified it by defining him as eternally divine, equal with Father and Spirit. Throughout church history, theologians were reluctant to admit that God can suffer. The Crucified became the Glorified; a "theology of glory" came to displace the original "theology of the cross."

Faith in the Christ was not a question of a formal set of propositions, as in our modern understanding of the creed, but "the practice of the presence of God," that is, of the Crucified. Thus a community of the faithful gathered for worship (of the indefinable God) and practiced works of love and justice (Kingdom acts) without demanding uniformity on exactly how the fact of Christ was understood.

Must we take the doctrines that cause so much trouble today—

creation, original sin, Noah's flood, virgin birth, miracles of nature, bodily resurrection—ascension—literally, that is, as history? Can they be understood in non-literal ways? The gospels are not history but witness and argument. John Calvin was fond of the term "improper" to describe our God-talk, for in the Bible "God walks softly as with a mother step" and "prattles (*balbutit*) to us" in a sort of baby talk.

As to biblical authority, our failure to honour the insights of interpretation has created a laity who are fundamentalists by default. How can we read scripture, with its various kinds of literature, aright if we don't recognize the need for interpretation? And how can we interpret if we have not been given the tools? (Our clergy can hardly do this in 20 minutes weekly.) The true scripture is the interpreted scripture: "a text without context becomes pretext for proof-text." The classic view was a fourfold interpretation: literal (i.e. literary), allegorical, moral and mystical.

Not only our younger generations but also many who still attend church have legitimate doctrinal doubts. Surrounded by high-tech hype of New Age, world religions, cosmic possibilities, self-help—no wonder our simple narrative preaching does not turn folks on. If there is still a "famine for the Word of God" as Jeremiah said, let's make sure it's the authentic Word for today and not a hangover from modernity with its trust in reason and "systematic" theology. The reformers taught theology indirectly—they interpreted scripture and commented on such theological "topics" as arose from the texts. So we must beware of making theology into a system that lacks life. Christian faith is more than mere belief, and scripture is more than meets the eye. ■

Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland is professor emeritus at McGill University and Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a member of the Theology 101 committee.

**PART TWO**

Simply Christian in a Secular Age

DEVELOP A FIRM AND CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S BENEVOLENCE.

BY JOHN VISSERS

In a well-known Monty Python sketch, an English gentleman is sold a dead parrot and tries to return it to the pet shop from which it was purchased 30 minutes earlier. When presented with the evidence—a stiff corpse nailed to a wooden perch—the store clerk famously replies: “It’s not dead, it’s just resting!”

If mainline Protestantism in Canada is not dead, it’s certainly on life support, and not just resting. Most Canadians, young and old, don’t attend church

even though they believe in God. The reasons are varied and complex and it may be that some find the church’s theology hopelessly conservative and outdated. But it’s also possible that they stay away because they don’t see the point. What’s on offer in many mainline Protestant churches today is a form of liberal or progressive Christianity that’s difficult to distinguish from the values of a secular age.

Why should anyone worship a God who is impotent and irrelevant in daily

If mainline Protestantism in Canada is not dead, it’s certainly on life support, and not just resting

life, distant and mysterious and unknowable, a benign and benevolent deity who really can’t do much to help? Why ➤

Why should anyone worship a God who is impotent and irrelevant in daily life, distant and mysterious and unknowable?

should you entrust your life to Jesus if he's only a spiritual teacher who offers inspiring insights but not salvation? If human beings are basically good and just need a little encouragement and education, there are, quite frankly, much better places to find that help than your local church. Why be part of a faith community that offers little meaning for life and little hope in death? The nominal form of culture-Christianity that one finds in many mainline Protestant churches is friendly enough but it offers little power for transformation.

Walter Bryden saw this clearly 80 years ago. He wrote equally against rational orthodoxy (fundamentalism) and rational idealism (liberalism) which bedevilled the church of his day. Both, he argued, reduced the gospel to western forms of Enlightenment reason. As a result, the church is confronted with the choice between affirming divine doctrine or experiencing divine mystery. Fundamentalism pushes the church in the direction of sectarianism; liberalism allows it to drift towards secularism.

The first looks for certainty in doctrinal propositions; the other dismisses doctrine in favour of universal human ideals. In their place, Bryden proposed what Yale theologian Hans Frei would later name "a generous orthodoxy,"

neither fundamentalist nor liberal (for his recent book, Brian McLaren borrowed the title from Frei). Bishop Tom Wright calls it *Simply Christian*.

A generous orthodoxy resists both obscurantism and relativism. It teaches that God is known not because we search God out but because God has revealed Godself in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, fully human and fully divine. The Christian church confesses that human life will be transformed not because we can make things better but because God has acted decisively in the life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Our response to what God has done is faith.

Holistic faith is the way of the head, heart and hands. It involves doctrine, devotion, and discipleship. The creeds (*credo*—"I believe") were said, sung, signed (sometimes with blood, sweat and tears), and studied. Calvin defined faith as "a firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence towards us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit." (*Institutes* 3.2.7)

We would do well to learn about this kind of faith from our sisters and brothers in the majority world, especially those who have come to live among us from the global south. They

offer a robust and joyful form of Christianity that appeals to people of all classes (not just the bourgeois middle class) and their churches are growing. They tell us that a good dose of gospel teaching stiffens the ecclesial spine. They experience their faith and they expect costly discipleship. They look at us and they know that accommodating the Christian faith to its cultured despisers is a western strategy that has failed.

The American writer John Updike said, "Faith is a force of will whereby a Christian defines himself against the temptations of an age. Each age presents its own competing philosophies ... Skepticism and mockery surrounded the first apostles ... Christ risen was no more embraced by Paul and his listeners than by modern skeptics. The stumbling blocks have never dissolved. The scandal has never lessened."

By trying to lessen the scandal for the past 100 years, Canadian Protestants have sown the wind; we may now be reaping the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7). Scripture reminds us that God's Spirit will not always strive with us (Genesis 6:3). If we insist on revising the faith according to our own interests we will be in danger of cutting ourselves off from the catholic tradition and the church universal. Confessing Jesus as Lord and Christ in a secular age is not fundamentalism; it is simply Christian. ■

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Rev. Dr. John Vissers is principal of Presbyterian College, Montreal. He is also a member of the Theology 101 committee.

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The Transfiguration by Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino,
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Jesus. Himself. Alone.

MOMENTS OF GLORY ALWAYS CALL US TO DISCIPLESHIP.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Last Sunday in Epiphany
March 6, 2011 reading:

Matthew 17:1-9

It's a long, hard climb up Mount Tabor, where tradition says Jesus was transfigured. The way is steep, and the road narrow. You have to leave your tour bus at the bottom. Transfer to a taxi. The Tabor taxi drivers love to drive fast, and fly around the sharp bends in the road.

When you get to the top, there's a little church. Sometimes the peak is cloaked in mist, and you can't see much at all.

One day ... Matthew says it was six days after Jesus challenged his disciples to become cross-bearers. The same week Peter blurted out that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus invited Peter, James, and John to climb up to the sort of place where he found it easier to get close to Abba.

When Saint Columba landed on Iona, he declared it a "thin place." Jesus went to a place where the veil between

heaven and earth was stretched thin. There was a breakthrough. Jesus was transfigured. The glory—light of God's presence—shone in his face. Bleached his clothes. Enveloped the thin place like a mist, a cloud caught on a mountain crag.

In that moment it was clear Jesus was one with the Creator of the universe, the Father of Israel, the Great "I Am." Clear for all to see.

Moses and Elijah were there. Somehow, Peter and the others recognized them. Men who met God on ➤

mountains. One, in sound and fury. The other, in stillness and silence.

This is a strange story. The stuff of dreams. Or nightmares. It reaches back to Jesus' baptism. When God said, "This is my Son, the beloved; with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17)

With this addition: "Listen to him!"

The transfiguration is like a hinge in the gospel. After this, it's all downhill for Jesus and his friends. Down, southward, to Jerusalem. Toward another hill. Toward the cross. But wait! Peter wants to build a church on the hilltop. Three shrines, at least. Peter doesn't get it. It's not about the light, the awe, the rush of emotion that comes when we realize we're in God's presence. It's not about the moment of transfiguration.

Matthew underlines this when he tells us, "when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone." Jesus. Himself. Alone. Deliberate repetition.

After the sound and light show ... When the signs and wonders fade into history ... After the burst of energy and excitement ...

After the answered prayer, the minor miracle, the unexpected gift. And on those days when prayers seem to rise no higher than the kitchen ceiling. When inspiration is just a fond memory.

What's left? What do we have? When we go home on Sunday, after a service that gripped us, lifted us up, drove the shadows away. What do we have on Monday morning? The week after Easter? A month after Christmas?

Jesus. Himself. Alone.

What's left, when there's no more water in the font? When the baby's forehead is dry?

Jesus. Himself. Alone.

You and I are disciples, walking a lifelong road. Sometimes we walk in brilliant light, sometimes in shadow.

Momentary blessings, explosions of insight, glimpses of God's face feed us on our way. It's what we do after those experiences that really matter.

The German philosopher Nietzsche wrote, "The essential thing 'in heaven and earth' is ... that there should be long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living."

Long obedience in the same direction. Following Jesus, himself, alone.

The glory of God shines in this world when people live in God's way. The true image of God is revealed in faithful people. And that is how the transfiguring power of God's Son is set loose in this world. A Voice calls us today, "Listen to him!" ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission

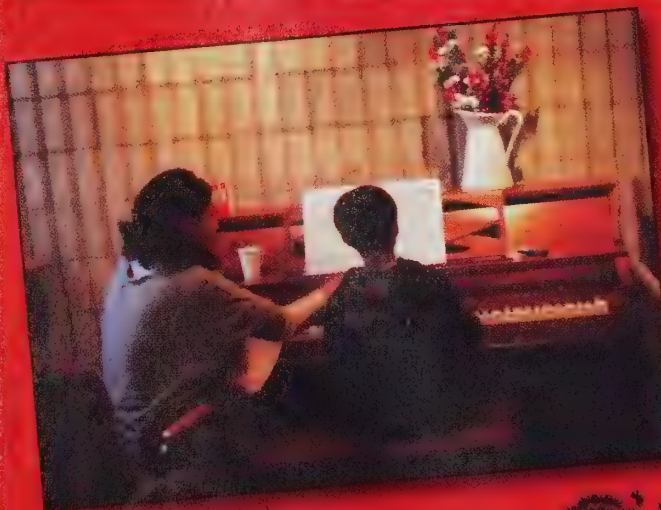


Photo credit: Chang Park

In 2008, University Presbyterian Church launched its Reaching Up Ministry for young people in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood of Toronto. The after-school ministry offers students free tutoring with their homework and free music lessons on piano, violin and trumpet. Seed money for the ministry was provided through a grant from the Creative Ministry with Children and Youth Fund, one of the Mission Priority Funds of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Begun through undesignated bequests to the PCC, the Mission Priority Funds were established to provide Presbyterians the opportunity to channel their planned gifts into vitally needed areas of ministry and mission that match the areas of their interest and passion.



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The Secret of Ministry

HINT: IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE GOOD NEWS. BY MARC FRASER

The hallowed halls of seminary are behind me now, and the first years of ministry have quickly passed. In my time in seminary, I learned about Peter and Paul, Calvin and Luther, apologetics and Christology and much, much more. That being said, I was never taught the secret of doing ministry, a simple formula that would enable me to connect my theology with my

pastoral care, my exegeses with my sermons. In my final term of seminary, I came to the conclusion there was no easy answer to connecting these dots. So following the example of Peter, I girded up my mind (1 Peter 1:13) and began to search for a call.

So it was with some surprise that after graduation I was told, by several ministers, what was to them and also to me “the secret to ministry.” And this secret was so simple; all I had to

accomplish were three easy steps which would connect my theological training to the practical elements of ministry.

Warning! This is a secret! If you do not want to ruin the beginning of your ministry then please stop reading now!

Okay, now that you have been warned you are probably wondering: what is the secret of ministry?

The first secret is to preach the Good News. Yes, it is that simple, just step up and lead those gathered ►

for worship in the Good News. Do not let the illustrations, or the plot hook take centre stage, because what we are commanded to do is to simply speak the Good News (1 Thessalonians 2:4). For more on how to preach the Good News just sing the words to the old hymn, "Tell me the old, old story." Finally remember it is the "good" news! Not the sad or boring news but the source of our rejoicing. This is especially true in the midst of strife and the conflicts which trouble our lives. (1 Peter 1:6-9)

The second secret of ministry is to visit. Again, it is just that simple, step out of your house or your office and visit with church members, visit with individuals you have not seen at church for a while or visit those who cannot attend church at all. Now if you are like me, visiting may be a daunting task but Jesus never preached that serving him would be easy (Matthew 16:24).

So we are to visit fellow members of our holy family, brothers and sisters in Christ. As ministers and elders we visit to touch and to support others in their daily walk with Jesus. Visiting is caring; it may entail holding the hand of someone dying, dropping in to just say hello or opening your office door to someone who just wants to talk.

Now the final secret of ministry, love the people. This point can often be the hardest, but in the end it is the one which will enable you to accomplish the other points. For if you love the congregation, how can you not preach about eternal life with God? How can you not drop everything and visit with a person in need? But to love is to make yourself open to hurt and suffering, to be rejected and spurned. Also, by loving others you are enabled to walk the miles of the journey with them, to bend down and pick them up and to allow

them to be a part of your journey. With love we are able to see the hand of God and to joyously lift up our confession that Jesus is Lord.

Now these are the secrets of ministry that I have been told by ministers who have struggled to live out their calling. Carrying them out will be mine to accomplish, though I hope that you will find direction through them in your own ministry. But what I have already experienced behind these secrets is the love, the mercy and power of God. I know carrying out these three points will be worth all the costs. So I pass these secrets, as told to me, onto you so that in the beginning or in the middle of your ministry you can reflect on how God has called us to serve Him and His children. ■

Rev. Marc Fraser is minister at Rocky Mountain House, Alta.

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Walking with Others

A STORY OF LAY MINISTRY. BY ELIZABETH ALBRECHT-BISSET

In 1970's Fredericton, where I grew up, there was an annual walk-a-thon that was a rite of passage for a lot of us. It went from the YMCA building in the centre of the city to the Mactaquac dam and back—a distance of about 25 miles.

Walking 25 miles is an epic adventure when you are nine, and that's how old I was the first year my best friend, Cindy and I were allowed to participate. The walk took us along a

road that ran parallel to the St. John River. We met a girl we recognized from school. Her friends had walked on ahead because she was slow, so we invited her to walk with us.

There were many walkers at the beginning of the day, but as the morning wore on the crowds thinned. By the 12.5-mile checkpoint at the dam, the romance of the event had faded. The first aid volunteers rubbed our blistered feet with alcohol and chatted about *if* we'd be able to

complete the walk. Cindy and I were convinced we could. Our new friend was less sure.

A mile or two after the rest stop, our friend gave up. Her feet hurt so much that she sat down beside the road and cried. Cindy and I weren't too worried at first. There were lots of vehicles patrolling the route. Sure enough, we saw an aid ambulance coming down the road. We waved, but it didn't stop. After what seemed like forever, we saw a police car ➤



Ryan, a student of the author's, was diagnosed with a brain tumour at age nine. He passed away a year later.

approaching. This time Cindy and I waved, jumped up and down and shouted. It drove past, too. Our injured friend was convinced that nobody would find her. Just as I was about to leave for help, a small red car pulled up—and out stepped my piano teacher. She knew I was walking (because she'd sponsored me) and thought it would be fun to see how I was doing.

She gladly picked up our injured friend and drove her home. Cindy and I managed to make it to the 18-mile checkpoint before we gave up. We didn't quite make the 25 miles that year—but we did the next year.

Both Cindy and I were struck by the parallel between our walk experience and the story of the Good Samaritan. We didn't blame the ambulance driver or the police—we knew they probably already had tired walkers

filling their vehicles—but we were fascinated with the idea of someone unexpected being a rescuer.

Over the years, as I grew older and my faith grew too, I thought of entering the ministry. However, in the end I made other life choices. I decided to get married. I became a teacher to help support a husband whose goal was to enter the ministry. I decided that being a minister's wife could be just as useful a contribution. Then my marriage ended unexpectedly and I found myself in my late 30s wondering what I'd given up.

I love my job working with children and their parents and I have never regretted becoming a teacher, but I wondered about where my faith life was going.

My answer came slowly, and the one who taught me the most was a nine-year-old child, a student in my class.

Ryan was one of those strong kids who was tall for his age and constantly playing hockey or soccer. He was a delight in the classroom—quick to smile and even quicker to help others. The May he was in my class, Ryan was diagnosed with a brain tumour. He'd only been away from school for about two days with what seemed like the stomach flu. It was a shocking development. Everyone in the community asked, "why him?"

I learned what bravery was that year. Bravery is a grinning nine-year-old boy proudly showing you the

brain surgery scars on his head and telling you it makes him a hero.

Almost a year after the diagnosis, Ryan died. We had a school board crisis team in to help students, staff and families. It would be hard not to be affected by the death of any child you teach. However, there was another bond I had with Ryan. His family and mine came from the same small, southwest Ontario town. The funeral was at the same church my oldest cousin was confirmed into. Ryan was buried down the road from the house where I was born.

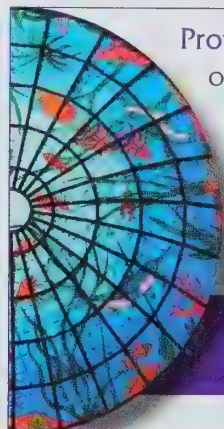
During those days, the story of the walk-a-thon came back to me. When I was nine, my epic journey was a 25-mile walk. Ryan's epic journey at the age of nine was battling cancer.

Thoughts of my piano teacher came back, too. Was her role one of ministry perhaps? My piano teacher and I went to the same church and her drive out to see how I was doing on the walk was part of her expression of faith and community. Because of this, she found herself in the right place at the right time.

As I found myself consoling students during that time after Ryan's death, and later helping to plan a school memorial, I began to see that this too was ministry. Ministry is not about being ordained or having a formal role. It is a willingness to put ourselves in the right place and at the right time in whatever we are doing. It is a willingness to be there with others even when the place and time are harsh.

It's not really a revolutionary idea. Most post-Reformation churches have emphasized the importance of lay leadership and ministry. However, it's always an important idea to share. We can engage in ministry no matter who or where we are. ■

Elizabeth Albrecht-Bisset is a teacher in Toronto and has written and edited children's dictionaries and educational books. She is an elder at Trinity, York Mills.



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The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2011 Edition, Issue 1

ABRIDGED
VERSION

Special Report
HAITI:
ONE YEAR
LATER

Spotlight on Haiti

WHY HAS PROGRESS IN HOUSING PEOPLE BEEN SO SLOW?

IT IS NOT THE NGOS. MOUNTAINS OF RUBBLE AND ARCHAIC LAND LAWS ARE SLOWING HAITI'S PROGRESS

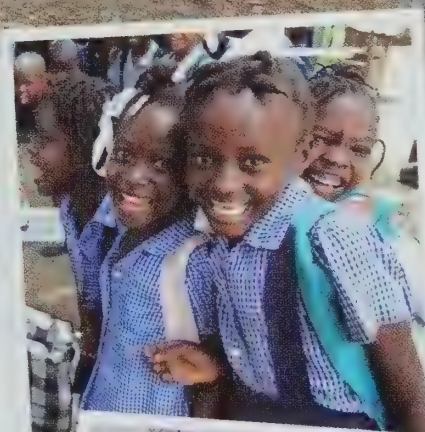
MEDIA HEADLINES DESCRIBE A COUNTRY THAT IS ON ANYTHING BUT the road to recovery. A year after the earthquake, Haiti is still plagued by piles of rubble, few new houses, and over a million people living under canvas or temporary shelters. Uncertainty and frustration are everywhere.

Despite huge efforts to respond to the multiple needs of Haitians, relief and development agencies concede that the pace of recovery is slow. In some places in Port-au-Prince, it is difficult to tell that twelve months have passed since the magnitude 7.0 earthquake.

In the year since the January 12 day of horror that killed 230,000 people, 1.3 million people are still forced to live in over a thousand camps—communities that sprung up virtually overnight and have been described as squalid and unsafe. The earthquake left 315,000 houses destroyed or uninhabitable.

Life in camps has become the norm for many who are unable to build, simply because the rubble of their neighbours' houses remains where it fell, or because they cannot find or afford plots of land. How is Haiti to rebuild its homes, and where?

Land reform was one of the country's most pressing issues well before the earthquake. Today it is even more so and Haitians are frustrated at the perceived lack of progress. ➤



PWS&D is responding ecumenically in Haiti through the Action By Churches Together (ACT) Alliance, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and Canadian Churches in Action. ACT Alliance general secretary John Nduna says the situation in Haiti is untenable and urgent steps need to be taken to get people into homes.

The birthright of over a million people to the safety and dignity of a home—whether owned, rented or shared—is compromised by the impasse over access to available land.

Currently, land is one of the top three obstacles to growth. The lack of a master plan for removing rubble and rebuilding sits alongside the political stalemate and lack of jobs. A focus on building permanent houses is paramount. However, it's often impossible to determine who owns land, and if authorities or organizations get this wrong, the people they are trying to help can end up homeless again. With little clarity over land ownership and little money for Haitians themselves, it is mostly non-governmental organizations, both local and international, that have constructed new homes—so far on land made available by the state, since most of the land available for rebuilding is owned by the government or private individuals. Until much larger swathes are available, it will be impossible to re-house the vast majority who are now homeless.

To date, over 1,400 homes have been built with hundreds more planned. However, the number of people still living under sheets and in tents in the sub-standard conditions of the camps is unacceptable. Until land ownership issues are addressed, they remain living in those undignified conditions indefinitely.

Haiti has an abundance of unused land, most of which is owned by the state or rich individuals. Key questions such as where houses will be built, which land can be used,

whether the shelter built now is to be temporary or permanent, and how much compensation should be paid to people who lost their houses, cannot be easily answered.

Addressing Haiti's land question

Some local and international organizations are doing what they can to address the land and housing problem. Many are working to identify long-term solutions to the problem and small-scale pilot housing projects are underway. Others are working on transitional shelters to address immediate needs by helping communities to build houses on land borrowed from owners for three to five years.

The incentive to re-build is strong but the lack of money to do so stymies the efforts of many Haitians. Rural families, now accommodating dozens of relatives in small houses, need bank loans to rebuild low-income housing over a number of years.

ACT Alliance coordinator of the emergency response in Haiti, Geneviève Cyvoct, saw Haiti at its most vulnerable. She now sees a country moving toward stability and greater hope, as long as a solution to the housing problem is made a priority. Along with land tenure issues, homes need to withstand the rigours of life in a geological hotspot, prone to earthquakes and the worst the weather can throw at them.

"We have answered the first emergency needs. Now we are starting to rebuild and rehabilitate. That means giving people a more permanent home ... that minimizes people's vulnerability to future disasters."

Building new homes remains a high priority and work continues to help people move from living in camps into houses.



A lot of work still needs to be done to support people going back to their homes, if possible, or in rebuilding them. Strong leadership should be taken from the government but also from all the major players involved in solving the very sensitive issue of land ownership.

With files from ACT Alliance • Photos: Paul Jeffrey/ACT

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Next steps... The ACT Alliance is an alliance of 100 churches and church-related organizations that work together in humanitarian assistance and development. One year after the earthquake, the Alliance continues its response towards the earthquake, hurricane and cholera epidemic.



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This educational resource is produced by PWS&D with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

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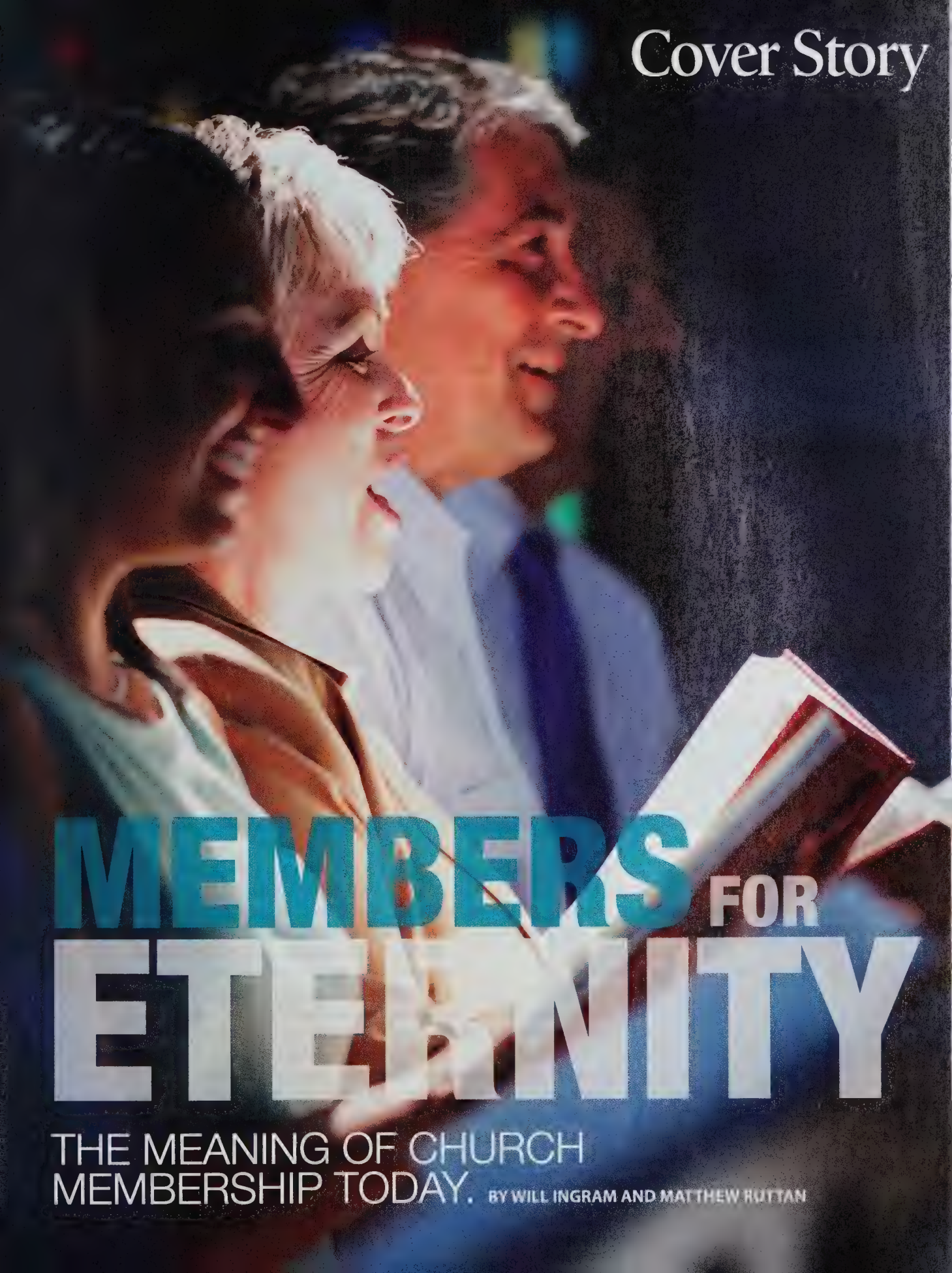
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Cover Story

MEMBERS FOR ETERNITY

THE MEANING OF CHURCH
MEMBERSHIP TODAY. BY WILL INGRAM AND MATTHEW RUTTAN



The meaning of church membership is relatively difficult to define in a very comprehensive way. We know the sacrament of baptism is the moment of our initiation into the body of Christ, and we may have heard references to the difference between “professing” and “covenant” members, but these finer points of theology do not offer complete clarity about what “membership” actually means.

Nonetheless, we are constantly inundated with statistics based on the concept of church membership. Sociologists make dire predictions about the future of the Presbyterian Church in Canada—and upon organized religion in general—based on their analyses of census data about the declining number of church members. Church growth experts prognosticate on the implications of this decline in membership over the short, middle and (if they are to be believed, the non-existent) long-term periods.

Some suggest that the number of people in worship may offer a more accurate way to assess church participation than the number of members on a constituent roll. While there is some validity in focussing on worship attendance, it raises other important questions about whether or not worship should be viewed as the



FOUR TRIED (BUT-NOT-SO-TRUE) ANSWERS

Many of us have heard it said that becoming a member of the church gives a person the right to vote at congregational meetings, and to participate in the call and election of ministers and elders. While this may be true, it is rather doubtful that there is anyone who is so desperate to vote at a typical Presbyterian congregational meeting that they would actually attend membership classes simply to acquire this noble right.

Another explanation, formerly, was that membership allows a person to participate in the sacrament of communion. At one time, this reason may have had some validity in congregations in which participation in communion was limited to those who had gone through membership or confirmation classes. Such is no longer the case. Rather, the journey towards a table that is open to all, including children, makes this explanation for membership increasingly anachronistic.

Regrettably, this supposed link between membership and communion led our ancestors to use the sacrament as one of the criteria for assessing active membership. This continues to be reflected in the *Book of Forms*, which suggests that a person is a member “in good standing” if they have participated in communion at least once in two years. By this criteria, a person can attend one worship service in a two-year span—all the while making no other qualitative, financial or temporal contributions to the life of their congregation—and still be considered an active member if they received communion the one time they happened to attend. Active membership must mean more than that.

A third explanation for membership has been that each of the members is assigned to an elder, who is entrusted with responsibility for their spiritual care. While this is a vital dimension of the elders’ responsibilities in a Presbyterian form of church organization, the reality is that this is a sadly lacking component of many congregations. Moreover, there are many new members to the church who neither understand, nor fully welcome, the pastoral role that elders have traditionally played—to say nothing of those elders who feel uncomfortable and inadequate in fulfilling this pastoral responsibility.

A fourth explanation for membership relies upon the metaphor of marriage. Like a wedding, vows of loyalty are made at the time of becoming a member. On many levels this may be a helpful metaphor. But there are difficulties in the use of the image of marriage to explain membership. After all, many marriages end in brokenness, which does not negate the validity of marriage, but simply acknowledges it is a painful experience for many. Moreover, the decision to move to another congregation may make a person feel unfaithful to their original vows if the marriage ►

defining activity for being an active member of the church.

The implications of the membership question are more significant than we might, at first, realize. After all, major decisions about priorities in mission, about national staff positions, and about funding for congregational initiatives continue to be informed by membership data. So, it might be asked, if membership is such an important component in these conversations about our vitality, our future and our identity, what does membership actually mean?

Although this is a question that is raised at every level of the church—from our ecumenical involvements to our local presbyteries—it is also a very practical question at a congregational level. After all, every congregation is invited to wrestle with this question whenever newcomers, upon being asked if they are interested in joining the community, respond with the obvious question—“maybe ... but what does it mean to become a member of the church?”

Like so many dimensions of our **faith**, membership is a concept with many facets of **meaning**

metaphor is overly used. Many would not make such metaphorical links, but explaining membership in relation to marriage may have pitfalls that would be wise to avoid.

So setting aside these four commonly offered explanations for the meaning of membership we return to the question: What does membership mean?

This question led us to invite a number of friends, elders and congregation members to offer their own reflections. Their responses served to remind us that, like so many dimensions of our faith, membership is a concept with many facets of meaning.

MEMBERSHIP AS BELONGING

Many of the responses touched on the image of membership in relation to the concept of belonging, or of being a part of a family. As one person wrote, "Off the top of my head, it means belonging to a spiritual family, the members of which, like in all families, have individual personalities and interests, but are united in their faith and in their caring for one another." A similar sentiment was expressed by a friend who wrote, "It hopefully provides a moral and loving community," but then jokingly added that they had once heard someone state that, "You can't work in a church and be a Christian!"

A new elder in one of our congregations stated that, for her, membership in a congregation meant that, "You always have a place. A place where you are never alone. A place where you can go but also with people that will never leave your side, always love and support you and when you alone can't stand against the rough time or walk the rough road—they will be there to help you, hold you, carry you, and love you."

While there are limitations to this image of the church as a family—not least in the fact that many congregations are affected by as much dysfunction as can be found in many families—there are important strengths to this link between membership and belonging. Such a notion implies an intentional commitment to others, and thereby helps challenge our contemporary culture's consumerist approach to church participation and spirituality. In an age when some people go church shopping with the unexamined assumption that the benefits of life in community are commodities to be assessed in the same way that other consumables are

assessed, the decision to become a member of a community reflects a willingness to commit oneself to share in the joys, the celebrations, and the struggles of life together—not simply for the sake of the benefits that one will receive.

This idea of membership as belonging also reflects the deeper spiritual reality of membership as a way of affirming one's baptismal identity as a constituent part of the body of Christ. The *Living Faith* statement reflects this dimension of membership in its declaration that, "Those baptized in infancy are called in later years to make personal profession of Christ." While a baptized person without formal membership in a congregation is still a part of the body of Christ, the decision to become a member of a congregation reflects their desire to make a public profession of their spiritual identity.

MEMBERSHIP AS PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTRY

A second important theme in many of the responses connected the concept of membership with a desire to become a partner in the ministry of a particular congregation. This seemed significant. Such an understanding of membership reflects a desire to dedicate one's gifts, resources, time, attention and energy to the ministry of a local community in a particular space and time. As one person wrote, "It is saying, 'Yes!' to standing alongside a worshipping, serving fellowship of people as we try to hear and learn from Jesus' voice in scripture, as we celebrate the sacraments of baptism and communion, as we worship, pray, sing and learn together, as we care for one another and as we share Jesus' love, peace and hope with a hurting world." Such a definition clearly reflects that membership is more than showing up for an hour on Sunday morning! While God is, by no means, confined to the church, the nebulous concept of encountering God in nature or on the golf course as a substitute for church participation reflects a limited awareness that the calling of Christ is meant to draw us into communion with others, and into communities in which there is a shared ministry of compassion and praise, service and prayer.

The implications for this concept of membership as partnership in ministry bear particular importance for sessions and for congregational mission committees. That is, if membership is viewed as partnership in ministry, it

becomes incumbent upon congregations to clearly define the specific nature of their ministry, and to offer ways for individuals to use their gifts in the ministry of their community. To say, "We love God and our neighbours," can be a faithful articulation, but it is necessary for the congregation to try to prayerfully work out how that might take shape in their particular context.

MEMBERSHIP AS A RESOURCE FOR DISCIPLESHIP

In our modern era, where participation in organized religion is often viewed in marked distinction from the concept of 'spirituality,' we found it interesting that many of the comments reflected the idea that membership had led to a deepened level of spiritual commitment. One of the respondents—whose career, it should be noted, was in the medical sciences—offered the comment that "church membership adds a necessary spiritual component with mystery and purpose to our secular humanist world devoid of God where all nature is rationalized by science." Such a comment clearly highlights the depth that dedicated membership in a congregation can potentially add to one's spiritual life.

In some ways, this may be the most overlooked dimension of membership—that it can be an indispensable resource for a more passionate and more dedicated life of discipleship. Recent church surveys—including the Natural Church Development research—seem to indicate that one of the major weaknesses in many mainline congregations is a lack of "passionate spirituality." One person, who grew up in a different part of the world, stated that they had been brought up with the understanding that the church would provide spiritual nourishment and opportunities for holistic growth, and that the members would contribute resources and time in order to make their congregation sustainable and viable in its private life and its public witness. "However," she wrote, "in the North American context, this focus is not well defined or practiced." A renewed understanding of church membership as a resource for discipleship may help to address this weakness.

Such an understanding of membership will have consequences for our life in community. After all, if congregations are going to become more effective resources for discipleship, it will be necessary to shift our understanding from the idea of active church participation as membership in a social club towards the idea of discipleship in a spiritual community. The strength that can come from life in such a spiritual community was reflected in the comment of one individual who stated, in response to the question why he became a member, "Because I can't follow Jesus alone; it's too hard."

Such a statement reflects a central tenet of Christian spirituality—that we live in the communion of saints as the Holy Spirit animates our interpretation of scripture and guides us in our journey together as followers of the risen and living Christ. This also serves to remind us that the church—and its membership—cannot, ultimately, be explained entirely on sociological or anthropological grounds. Rather, we believe in the power and the activity of the Holy Spirit. As Christians in the Reformed tradition, we have historically upheld the power and the function of scripture in the Spirit's work of shaping and forming the church—but this is a double-edged reality. This means, as Fred Craddock (the New Testament professor at Emory University) reminds us, that membership in this Spirit-led community means, "Being responsible to and being responsible for the scriptures." Thus membership is not just about a sociological community: it is called by God, animated by the Holy Spirit, guided by scripture, abiding in Christ—together.

THE MEANING OF MEMBERSHIP

So what does it mean to become a member of the church?

It means that we are publicly affirming our baptismal identity as people who belong to the body of Christ; it means that we are dedicating our lives to becoming partners in the ministry of a community of faith; it means that we are embracing the gift of community as a resource for deepening our calling to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

At the very heart of all of these reflections about the meaning of membership is the conviction that our relationship with Christ has relational implications. Such an understanding of membership in community as a requisite component of Christian discipleship was beautifully articulated by the German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his work entitled *Life Together*, in which he wrote, "Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. ... What does this mean? It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity."

In other words, on our better days, our life together in the church is meant to be a foreshadowing of heaven. Which, we think, is a fairly good explanation of what membership means. ■

Rev. Will Ingram is minister at St. Andrew's, Toronto. Rev. Matthew Ruttan is minister at Westminster, Barrie, Ont.

Barth's Rhythms

CHURCH DOGMATICS AS POETRY

BY MICHAEL WELTON

GOD CHOSSES THE FRONTIER

That crosses the frontier
It is a real one
For on one side, God
All majesty, holiness, righteousness—
On the other side, Man
The finite, the one made of flesh
Whose very flesh
Crosses from opposition
Between the two
A yawning abyss
Only Christ can cross this frontier
Only God, his Creator and the Lord
The One who can only hide his face from Man
Now become so dreadful
But still with faculties to receive and know his God
Man cannot imagine how this God,
Infinitely beyond the abyss
Contacts him, touches him, finds him
The accused one, humbled and judged
Now received and reclaimed
Spoken to as a friend, even so utterly affectionately
Now called child.

THE STRANGENESS OF THIS EVENT

It was not self-evident
Should he drink from this cup?
This decision not taken lightly
Only with great difficulty
He knows that he can through
Hail and crucifixion
When he will drink—
Of the darkness that came at that hour
The result of this — all the people
Of the earth and all the rocks
Opened graves
Anticipating his own end
The common blasphemy
At the strangeness of this event
It had to take place
It did take place
What a scandalous reversal!
The Son accepted in fear and trembling
The hard thing that he must do
To deliver us from divine judgment.

Michael Welton is an historian and teacher of Karl Barth. He lives in Ann Arbor. These poems are taken, mostly, from Barth's Church Dogmatics, vol. IV]—On Reconciliation.

MAN IS NOTHING

Man is nothing
Without the grace of God
Man is the covenant breaker
But God is everything
He gave his Son, reconciling the world
Unto Himself
God does not intend for Man
To be nothing,
He, too, may be everything
But in his own place
Newly created and grounded
From Above
In the end, in the atonement
He becomes God's man

MAN CAN HAVE PEACE WITH GOD

Man can have peace with God
But how? On what basis?
Only one answer: by the Word of God
In Jesus Christ
By faith in him, awakened by the One
Who quickens faith so mysteriously
We confront a great riddle
How? On what basis?
It is only by the grace of God
This coming to Man by God
Comprehensible only to Him
The atonement, accomplished by This One
Who stoops to us
His sovereign act
Owed neither to Himself nor to us
Yet, it has taken place, made manifest
Willed and accomplished by God
True because willed by Him.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONE

Jesus Christ is the One
Who bears our sin
He answers for it
He does not stand far away
Yet we are not mere spectators
Of this alien work
Hardly affected, crowded out
Of our place
He represents us
Our sin rests on him
He takes it with divine authority
He forgives us
We recognize ourselves in him
In him we find ourselves
But the first time we live truly

WISDOM IN THE NIGHT

The wisdom of the night
Lives in July
It walks the unbroken road
Knows its cause, sees the operation
But it does not give the command to halt
This is the road of those who forget
Their Creation, eyes firmly to the ground
Why can't we remember
What has been forgotten?
At the end of our wandering in the night
Lies Death.

THE SIN FORGIVEN IS NOW THE OLD THING

The sin forgiven is now the old thing
The essence of all that is old
Something which is past, done with
No longer present
Without any future
Forgiveness of sins
This is the central meaning
Of the divine action of Jesus Christ
Forgiveness of sin requires his passion.

Women on the Cutting Edge of Mission

RETHINKING CLICHÉS ABOUT THE WMS AND AMS. BY HEATHER JONES

My grandmother was one of the gentlest, kindest, all 'round nice people I have ever known. I never heard her raise her voice, nor heard her say an unkind word about any person. She was, I believe, an archetypical grandmother. That's what we think of when we think of grandmothers, isn't it? Grandmothers are people who bake cookies, and remember birthdays, and remind us, mostly through their own example, of proper manners expected for every situation.

What do you think of when you think of the Women's Missionary Society or the Atlantic Mission Society? I believe that most people, when they think about the WMS and AMS, think of grandmothers. Images of elderly women, praying for 'heathen' peoples in faraway lands may come to mind for many people. Others may think of small groups of women gathering on a weekday afternoon for tea and cookies. Perhaps you have seen a collection of knitted baby hats, vests and blankets being collected for overseas hospitals—that WMS makes you think of knitting needles and postage stamps.

It is true that many members of the WMS and AMS pray for people in countries around the world, and that most (though by no means all) of their groups hold their regular meetings in the afternoon. It is also true that many members knit and send knitted goods overseas. None of the images that come to so many people's minds when they hear "mission society" are inherently wrong. The problem is that so many of those images are severely limited. Too many people think they know these women, when in fact they know very little about the wide range of activities and concerns that members and groups are involved with. I recently spent a year working with the WMS, and I was reminded that in many ways this small group of (mostly) elderly women provides a prophetic voice to their congregations and to our denomination.

Just one case in point is the issue of human trafficking. The presence of recent items in the media indicates that there is a growing awareness of the extent of this crime in Canada and around the world. The WMS first undertook to study this issue in May of 2009. Soon after, June Campbell, a WMS representative on the Justice Ministries advisory committee, raised the issue with that group, which resulted in the decision that the WMS would take responsibility for raising awareness of the issue within our church. Efforts to

that end have included a campaign to collect signatures in support of Bill C-268—an Act to amend the Criminal Code with a minimum sentence for offences involving trafficking of persons under the age of 18 years—a series of articles in *Glad Tidings*, a speaker at the annual council meeting in May 2010, and, most recently, the recommendation presented by the WMS, and passed at the 136th General Assembly, that the "Moderator communicate to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, [and other politicians], the church's concern over human trafficking in Canada, and urge the government to develop and implement a national strategy to combat this growing trade."

Learning about human trafficking is not pleasant. Sharing tea and cookies, knitting hats for babies, praying for missionaries involved in frontline gospel work—these are grandmotherly things. Listening to stories about women and children who have been abducted, beaten, raped and drugged until their dignity is crushed and their spirits are broken, doesn't fit the common image of the WMS.

WMS and AMS members also encourage the volunteers and staff of International Ministries with cards and letters and prayers. They reach out to individuals in times of illness and grief with more cards and letters. They study justice issues and advocate on behalf of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized. They support educational programs and synod regional staff within our denomination with hundreds of thousands of dollars (a \$200,000 grant for regional staffing in 2009 alone). They have been a major force behind the declaration of Mission Awareness Sunday, and each year provide resources to help the rest of us understand just a little more about the work of our church and our partner churches around the world.

Many of the women in the WMS are grandmothers. Many of them reminded me of my grandmother. But all of them challenged me to remember that while I remember my grandmother teaching me to embroider and to enjoy a good cup of tea, I should also remember that she lived through two world wars, she raised six children through the years of the Great Depression, and she knew that her calling in life was to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with her God. ■

Rev. Heather Jones is a freelance writer. She was interim editor of Glad Tidings last year.



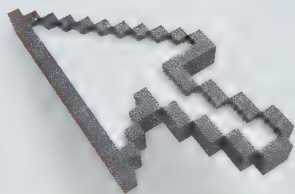
The 40-Acre Poplar Bush

A TIME TO BE BORN AND A TIME TO DIE. BY BARB ALSTON

On our farm, the story begins and ends and takes place in the 40-acre poplar bush. This bush offers protection from the prevailing northwest and west winds.

In April, I found an owl nest in a leaning poplar tree—perhaps 80 feet in the air. When the wind blew, the nest swayed to and fro. I saw movement in the nest—there were the little tufts of feathers, the tufts that give the great horned owl its name.

Later in the spring, grass began to grow, as did columbines and ►

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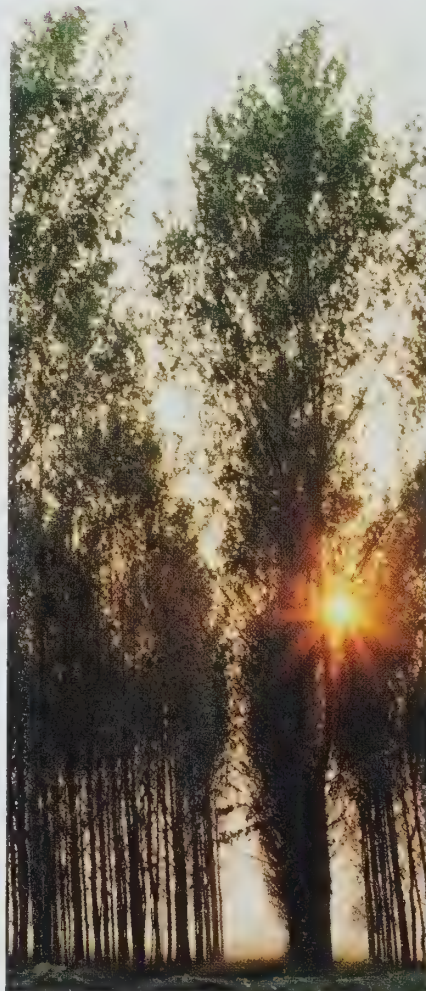
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**We are born,
and life is a strange
mixture of deep
joys and sorrows,
sadness and
happiness**

not good. So we left little mice up in a tree for the owl and left him.

One morning I went and saw the little owl sitting on a log. He never looked my direction, so I quietly went away.

That evening I took out a little ladder and some little mice to leave in the tree. The owl was nowhere to be found. There was something on the ground near the place I had last seen him. It was a large feather. It may be a hawk feather, as there is a pair of red-tailed hawks at the western side of the bush.

We are born, and life is a strange mixture of deep joys and sorrows, sadness and happiness. All around us dramas of birth and life and death are unfolding, in nature and in the lives of other human beings. You just never know. Big winds can come along and blow us off course, an illness that shocks us, a loss that knocks us right down, or a tragedy that we cannot imagine. We cannot control the winds; we can adjust our sails.

In Psalm 23 we are promised that the Lord will go before us even through the dark valleys. He in fact leads us. That to me is an extremely comforting thought. In Romans, we are reminded that all things can work together for good. God is with us in our journeys to the 40-acre poplar bush. ■

*Rev. Barb Alston is minister
at Melita, Man.*

raspberry. Later still, oak seedlings, chokecherries and poison ivy as well as many little plants I do not know the names of. Sometimes I would detect the owl on the nest; one time she was sitting in full view perched on an old, dead, tall poplar stump.

Seeing me, she silently swooped away.

Gradually trees leaf out. Everything is green.

A few weeks ago, there was a terrific wind, causing damage to cattle sheds and taking down many trees. I went out to see what I could see about the owl nest. There on the ground directly below the owl nest was a young buff-coloured owl, with brown stripes, yellow eyes staring, head turning.

It became a daily trip to see him. I contacted a friend and was lucky to have someone come and look at the owl. She said that human contact was

Table Talk

JOIN THE MODERATOR'S ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS. BY HERB GALE

I remember with fondness the Sunday lunchtime conversations I enjoyed during my first pastorate in North Carolina. It was the regular practice for us to gather together at a local restaurant after worship. The group that assembled was never the same. It included singles and couples, young adults and those of retirement age, longtime members of the congregation and newcomers—whoever happened to be interested on any given Sunday.

In our lunchtime discussions, we talked about anything and everything, usually with lots of laughter thrown in. Frequently, the conversation turned to the worship service and sermon, and I found it a helpful way to get feedback. Often the comments and questions became the inspiration for a future sermon, and many of the ideas that emerged turned into new programs or ministries. Those conversations taught me that preaching is not a monologue; it is a conversation between preacher and congregation, a conversation in which God is very much a part.

Too often when I visit a congregation or presbytery, I am the one doing all the talking. I have little opportunity to hear what is on the hearts and minds of people seeking to live out what it means to be the church. To remedy this, I am inviting Presbyterians to join me for what I am calling "Roundtable Discussions with the Moderator"—informal gatherings with opportunities for conversation and dialogue. I am more and more convinced that it is in such dialogue that we hear God speak and get a better

sense of the direction God is leading us as a church. For God is at work in the Presbyterian Church—of that I am sure. Of course, as Moderator, I have no more power than any other presbyter, but during my moderatorial year I do have what is sometimes called a "bully pulpit," and I hope to be able to share

PREACHING IS NOT
A MONOLOGUE; IT
IS A CONVERSATION
BETWEEN PREACHER
AND CONGREGATION

what I hear with others.

My first roundtable was held in January at Briarwood, Beaconsfield, Que., for the Presbytery of Montreal. Eighteen people, including seven from the Ghanaian congregation, participated. We began by sharing stories of generosity that had been transformative in our individual lives or the lives of our congregations. We then discussed challenges facing the church and signs of hope in our congregations and presbytery. We closed with group prayer, turning our conversation into an offering to God. I found it quite moving when one of the Ghanaians began to hum the melody line of the gospel hymn, *I Need Thee Every Hour* in a rich, baritone voice. Soon other voices began to weave their harmonies into the melody line as we joined together in singing the familiar refrain of the hymn:

"I need Thee, O I need Thee; every

hour I need Thee. O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee!"

That hymn was written in 1872 by a Baptist layperson named Annie Hawks in collaboration with her pastor, Robert Lowry. Ms. Hawks reports that she was moved to write the hymn when, in the midst of doing her household chores, she had an overwhelming sense of her Saviour's presence. Immediately, the words, "I need Thee every hour," came to her mind; words she promptly turned into poetry. Lowry added the tune and refrain. And so what began as a moment of grace for one person during her daily routine has become a source of comfort and grace for millions of Christians for nearly 150 years.

I invite you to add your voice to the conversation at the Moderator's Roundtable Discussions. For, as Hawks discovered, the Saviour is always near, and with him, our work can turn from drudgery to joy. And as the two despondent disciples discovered as they walked to Emmaus, when the risen Lord joins our discussion, a conversation that began in confusion and grief can end with a new sense of purpose and hope (Luke 24:13-35). ■

Blessings,



Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving for the PCC. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: PRMail@presbyterian.ca



First, Pictou, N.S.

The Sunday school of First chose Evangel Hall Mission, Toronto, for their 2010 mission project. The congregation and community responded to the Sunday school activities and efforts by raising \$2,300. Gary and Beverly Mingo, members of the church, presented the cheque to the executive director, Joseph Taylor, last October. Their two grandchildren are members of this active and growing Sunday school.



St. Andrew's, Maple, Ont.

St. Andrew's recently had occasion to party, as longtime member, Agnes Foster celebrated her 91st birthday. Helping Agnes with the celebration is her boyfriend, one-year-old Benjamin Smith.



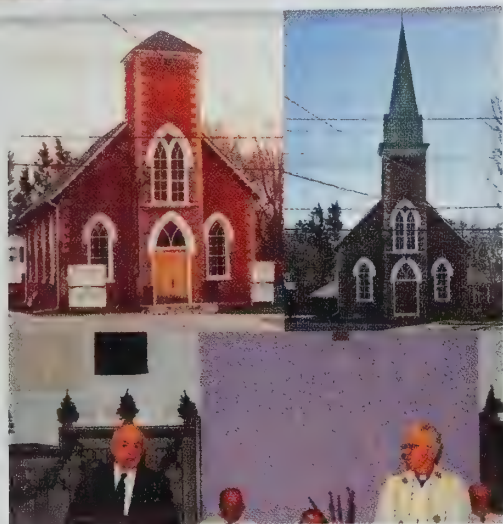
St. Matthew's, Wallace, N.S.

Just around Christmas, two new elders were ordained at St. Matthew's. There was cake. And on our website, the hard working Rev. Grant with the new elders, Nancy Reid and Peter Dewar; and a living nativity, with animals, at Pugwash. "O'n sgeul ait, cha bhi fad." Amen.



St. Andrew's, North River, N.S.

Where better to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation than on Cape Breton, which is where the celebrations were last October. The ubiquitous Rev. Mary Anne Grant (right) conducted worship and Holy Communion at St. Andrew's. Grant remembered her father, the blessed Rev. Charles A. MacDonald, one of the last fluent Gaelic ministers in Cape Breton. She is seen with her sisters, E. Margaret MacDonald and Dolly Brimicombe. The cake reads, "Celebrating Our Faith." More photos online.



Erindale, Mississauga, Ont.

Erindale celebrated its 50th anniversary last year. To finalize their celebration, they completed their long-term project of restoring the spire on their designated historic building. With the help of former members, local community and businesses and the Mississauga Historic Society, the spire, which was destroyed by lightning about 90 years ago, was erected last November. Seen here are Jim Kellhammer, chairman of the spire committee, addressing the congregation at the dedication service, with Rev. Ian MacPherson.



Chalmers, London, Ont.

Rev. John Bannerman confirmed these four youth last August at Chalmers. From left: Daniel Murray, Kathryn Brio, Bannerman, Jackie Bannerman and Abbey Poser. Also, Rev. John was installed as moderator of the Presbytery of London last September.

online extra

MORE GREAT STORIES ONLINE: Knox, Dunnville, Ont., makes bread, talks food and Fasts For Change.

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Obituaries

Giggins, Olena (Onie). The congregation was deeply saddened by the passing of Onie on Nov. 18, 2009 in her 92nd year. A faithful member, respected elder of Knox, Winnipegosis, Man., Onie was honoured and recognized for her work, diligence, honour and devotion by the Presbyterian Church in Canada in its centennial year. Onie's service in the Church included: Member of the board of managers, Sunday school teacher, choir member, pastoral care team, service in

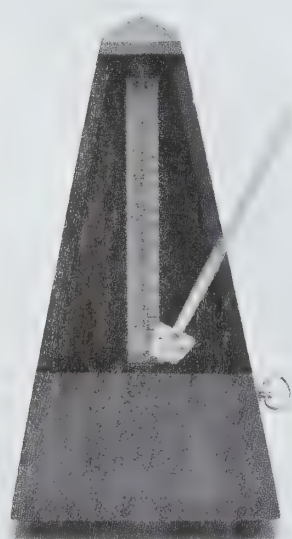
all areas of the Knox Ladies Aid. Onie's greatest passion and special gift to Knox Church was her service as organist for over 50 years. During this time she assisted at many functions locally, playing the organ at concerts, weddings, funerals and wherever her service was needed.

Onie was very active in the community and was a member of the Royal Purple Ladies for over 50 years. She was predeceased by her husband, Ray in 1977. Onie has now joined the Choir of Angels. We miss her dearly.

Grieve, Elda, passed away in hospital in Southampton, Ont., on Thursday, July 22 in her 83rd year. Survived by her husband, Grant, sons, Brian, Jim, Kevin and Gary, 10 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Elda was a faithful, long serving member of Knox Presbyterian Church in Burgoyne, Ont. She served as church secretary-treasurer for 30-plus years and was a life member of the Women's Missionary Society.

Irish, Lois Elaine, a dedicated elder at St. Andrew's, Penticton, B.C., passed away on Oct. 9, 2010 after a brief illness with cancer. Lois served as representative elder to presbytery and synod, and was very active with the Ladies Guild, Sunday school and committees of session. Lois leaves to mourn one daughter, Arlene, son, Kim, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Jennings, Rev. John J., B.A., M.A., B.D., died on Nov. 6, 2010 from colon cancer.



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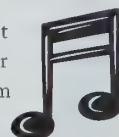
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But more importantly, he spent his life living for his Lord.

John was born on Feb. 16, 1923 in Lisnisky (near Portadown), County Armagh, Northern Ireland. He was raised by spinster aunts and bachelor uncles from the age of two. With the influence of godly neighbours, John attended a local revival tent meeting at the age of 13 when he first experienced his conversion to be a follower of Jesus, which he was for his remaining 74 years.

At age 22, John attended Dwight Moody's Bible Training Institute in Glasgow, Scotland, where he intended to become a medical missionary. However, John decided he was called into pastoral ministry. He then attended the Magee campus of Trinity College in Londonderry where he earned his M.A. in 1953. He subsequently attended Union Theological College in Belfast where he graduated in 1956.

In 1957, John, Mildred and their infant son, John left Ireland for Canada where he received a call to the three-point charge in Chatsworth, Dornock and Williamsford, Ont. In 1959, he received the call to the two-point charge in Meaford and Thornbury, Ont. In 1964, John received the call to Oakridge, London, Ont., where he served for 18 years. John served his final pastorate at St. Paul's, Ingersoll, Ont., retiring in 1989. After retirement he served as interim minister and supply preacher in South Nissouri and other congregations in the Presbytery of London.

In each congregation in which he

ministered, John and his family felt tremendously blessed. John cared for all of God's people with a pastoral, compassionate heart and that affection was returned several-fold. Pastoral visitation was of upmost importance to John and he viewed his entire ministry, even his excellent preaching, as a means by which he could pastorally support his congregation in their deepening relationship with Jesus and their living out of that joy.

John is survived by his beloved wife of 59 years, Mildred, their sons John, Robert, David and Ross, their daughters-in-law Christine, Laura and Florence, and their seven grandchildren. A service of worship to God in gratitude for the life of John Jennings was held at St. Andrew's and St. Stephen's, North Vancouver, B.C., on Nov. 13 conducted by Rev. Martin Baxter and with Rev. Dr. Ian Victor, a family friend, attending as moderator of the Presbytery of Vancouver Island.

Thanks be to God for the gift of John Jennings, God's good and faithful servant.

Logan, Gordon Douglas "Doug," died at the Willowgrove LTC Residence, Hamilton, Ont., on June 14, 2010 at the age of 81 years. His beloved wife, Mildred predeceased him in 2007. Doug was a retiree of the Stelco Hilton Works. He was a past master of Wardrope Masonic Lodge.

Doug loved and served the Church of Jesus Christ. He was an elder for over 50 years, first in St. John Presbyterian Church and then through the amalgamation with the Church of St. John and St. Andrew. Over the latter years he served as

clerk of session. Due to the onset that forced his retirement from service on session, he was accorded designation "elder emeritus." Doug a great supporter of Presbyterian within the Presbytery of Hamilton.

Doug was a respected member of community and someone sensitive a supportive to those in need. We thank God for the life of Doug Logan. "We done, thou good and faithful servant enter into rest."

MacArthur, Alex, in Port Elgin, Ont., on Tuesday, Oct. 12th in his 99th year. Alex was a longtime member and elder at Knox Presbyterian Church in Burgoyne, Ont. He was predeceased by his wife, Ruby, his son, Lloyd and grandson, Kirk. Left to mourn are his daughter-in-law, Judy, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Manson, Rev. William, died Nov. 6 after a seven-week illness. Born in Neilston, Renfrewshire, Sept. 4, 1936, his family immigrated to Toronto when he was 15. Bill

graduated from the University of Toronto (Honours Classics) in 1961 and Knox College in 1964. Appointed ordained missionary to Tatamagouche, his two pastorates—each 17 years—were Beaches, Toronto, and Cote des Neiges, Montreal. He was moderator of the Presbytery of Montreal, 1994-1995. He retired June 1, 2001, settling in Brighton, Ont. Married in 1969 in Glasgow, he and Jan formed a unique partnership. ■

CENTRAL TORONTO... CALLING YOU?

Rosedale Church, Toronto, has commenced a search for our next Minister. Find the Position Description, for a vacancy to start June 2011 at our www.rpcc.ca website - - or contact the Rev. Stephen Kendall, Interim Moderator, at skendall@presbyterian.ca or (416) 441-1111 x 227.

Called to Wonder

Now that Called to Wonder is 10 years old, it's
old enough to go

online!

Teachers, parents and kids will be able to talk to Erin and Jennifer and to each other, and share their stories about Jesus and about the joys and challenges of everyday life.

Remember,
Erin and Jennifer are eager to hear about the things you want to talk about.

Write Erin and Jennifer a letter!

Deadline for ideas:
March 31st, 2011

Parents and Sunday school teachers, please submit your ideas as well. In the next few months, I'll be doing a online forum in which to share your ideas and questions, and to download more activities.



What are your ideas for Called to Wonder topics?

Dear Erin and Jennifer,

I really want to talk about:

child's name and age, or adult's name and age(s) of children you work with:

Stay tuned for the Called to Wonder website and blog!

Send your ideas to PRMail@presbyterian.ca, or mail this page to Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M3C 1J7

Without going into the gut-wrenching details, our Buddy died from poisonous toxins from a small mushroom he scarfed down while on a walk

For the Journey, continued from page 50

left by the neighbor's dog and a whole array of mushrooms. Off of our property Buddy loved to try horse buns and cow pies. Whenever Buddy went outside you went out with him, not for your health but for his; and you spent half your time with your hands up to your elbows in his mouth digging out the latest thing he found and tried to scarf down.

The house really wasn't much different. Any food that hit the floor under any circumstance was his for the gulping. But so was any paper towel, facial tissue or candy wrapper. Nothing was out of the question. Soon after Buddy arrived on the scene, every waste can in the house had to be changed to one that had a self-closing lid. This was only a partial solution. Frequently we would still come home and find Buddy at the door with a pathetic, guilty look on his face. After doing an investigation we would find a lid pried off somewhere and the trashcan contents fully eaten. Once we found grandson Jacob's pocket calendar, chewed, swallowed and puked all over our bedroom pillow. Another time an investigation turned up daughter Chelsea's high school homework in a similar condition.

The pickup truck was fair game, too. We soon adjusted to keeping the pickup garbage free. One day on a trip to Vancouver Island we left Buddy in the truck to go up on deck to enjoy the scenic ferry ride. We came back and the people sitting in their car beside us rolled down their window and said; "Your dog has been up to something most of the way across. He keeps diving from the back seat to the front seat and back again." We quickly investigated and found Buddy had emptied the Kleenex



box, one tissue at a time. We hollered at him but he just smacked his lips.

Yesterday, our Buddy died a horrible death. Without going into the gut-wrenching details, our Buddy died from poisonous toxins from a small mushroom he scarfed down while on a walk. Linda was unable to get her hands down his throat fast enough. Our veterinarian couldn't load him up with enough charcoal or antidote. In spite of all of our desperate attempts to save him, Buddy was gone in a shockingly short time, a victim of his penchant for indiscriminate eating. We spent our whole lives together trying to save Buddy from his eating habit and we failed. We are absolutely shredded with hurt and grief. I am writing this story today partly as personal therapy, and partly as a way of confessing to God that I think I now know how He feels about me a lot of the time.

By whatever definition you want to hang on it, sin amounts to making indiscriminate life choices that lead to death. Because of my indiscriminate life choices, my sin, I have often felt like I am living out the title of one of Jonathan Edward's sermons, *Sinner in the Hands of an Angry God*. Because of my

sin I have often felt the judgment of God. Because of my sin I have often felt the anger of God. What I have not been sensitive enough to feel up to now is the pain, hurt and grief of God. As to sin and my choices, what if God is continually trying to reach into my mouth, so to speak, trying to save me from myself by trying to influence my proclivity for making indiscriminate choices? As to sin and me, what if God, from Torah to gospel, from commandment to Holy Spirit, is continually trying to influence my life choices? And

when in my predilection for making indiscriminate choices to sin, what if God feels pain, hurt and grief? What if God's judgment and anger really finds its roots in His love for me and the pain and grief He feels when I choose to sin and bring suffering and death upon myself?

There is a part of the Hebrew scriptures that has always challenged me, in a Lenten kind of way. It's the book of Hosea. This year it will be my Lenten reading project. In the book, through Hosea's relationships with two wives who have an affinity for making indiscriminate choices concerning men and sex, God describes his hurt and pain over Israel's sin. As I read it now, it sounds something like what I feel over Buddy and the indiscriminate eating that caused his death. ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



Indiscriminate Choices

CHOOSE SIN AND BRING SUFFERING. BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

TWELVE YEARS AGO, Linda, Chelsea and I, with some help from our adult son, Halden and my best friend, Jim, made the best doggone decision we have ever made. We bought a top quality, yellow Labrador Retriever pup at what we all thought was a ludicrous price, (hence all the help needed), named him Frosty Bud (because of his pale, frothy, beer-like colour) and proceeded to be blessed with a dog experience to pale all others. Buddy proved to be the smartest, most loving best friend and hunting partner I have ever encountered. He has excelled in all things, even in the past few years, his senior years.

I could go on and recount chapter after chapter of stories

about how great a dog Buddy turned out to be and perhaps sometime I will. But he did manifest one flaw. With what I hope is Buddy's permission, I want to tell a little story about this side of him.

At about nine weeks of age, Buddy turned out to be an incorrigible, indiscriminate eater. At first we thought it was just a puppy thing, but he never outgrew it. If he went outside to do his business, business was soon forgotten as he cruised the lawn looking for anything he could gulp down. Our lawn goes right down to the shore of Lac La Hache and there is always stuff on it ranging from peanut shells left by the squirrels, droppings left by the Canada geese, poop

continued on page 49



Maple tree planting on Canada Day Sunday.



St. John's Presbyterian Church built in 364 days and dedicated November 2004.

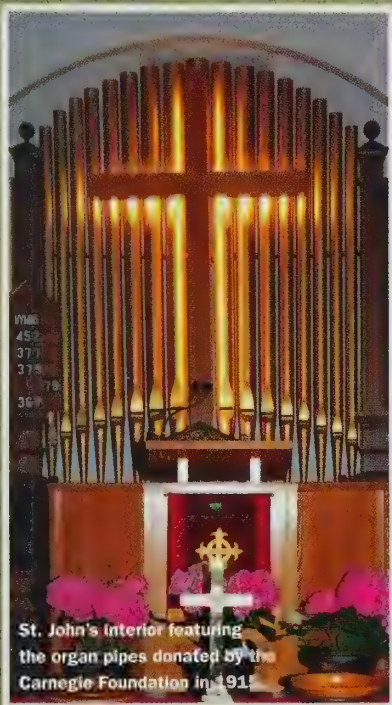


St. John's, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ont.

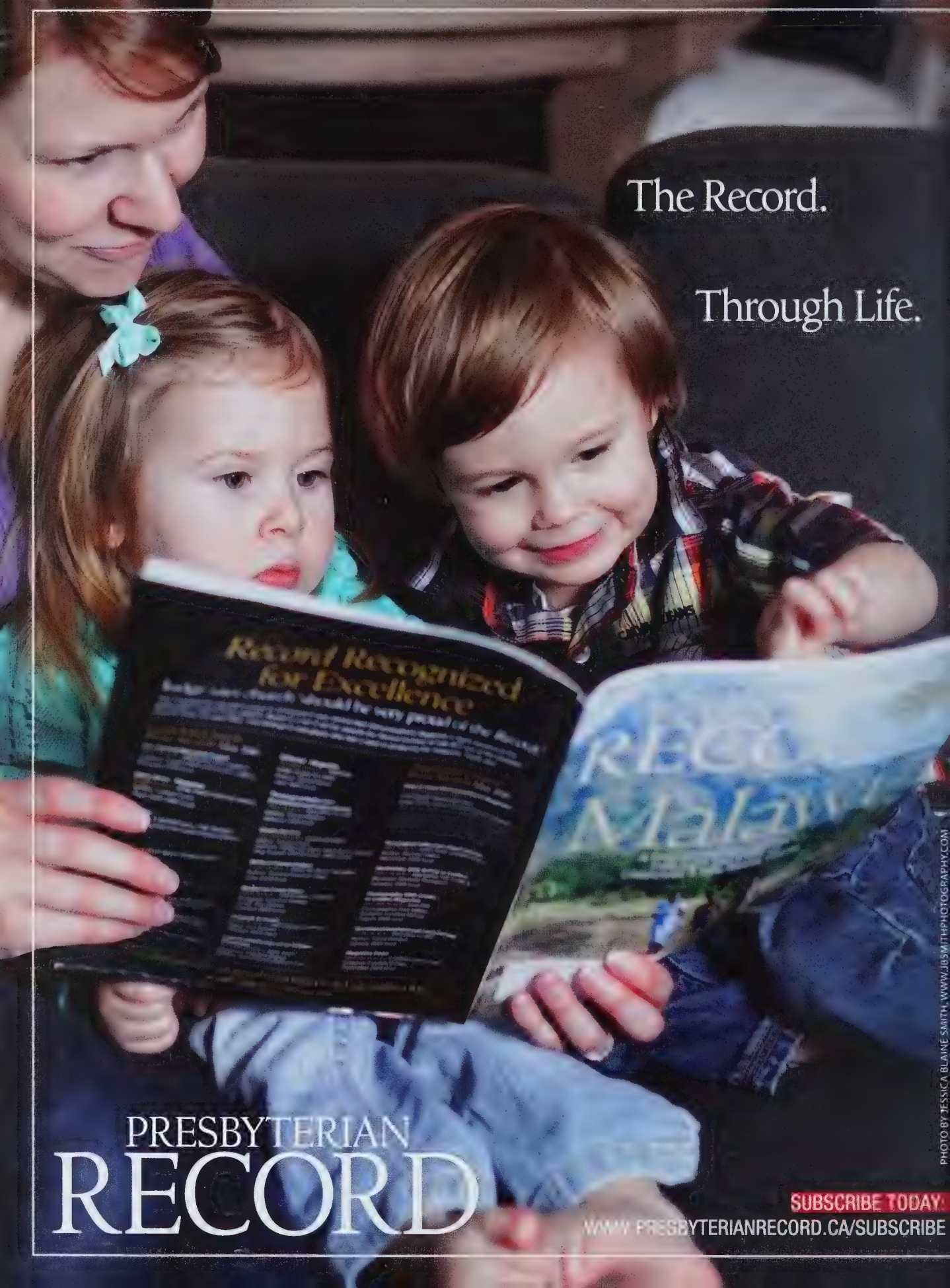
SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST SINCE 1819. BY DONALD MCGUGAN

St. John's has been a Christian faith community since 1819 when displaced Scottish settlers from the Red River area of Manitoba arrived in this area. Today, we are a growing congregation worshipping in a building that was dedicated five years ago. Our members come from as nearby as next door, and as far away as Barrie and Newmarket. The congregation reflects the mix of people who live in this part of Ontario. We exist to share the love of Christ through worship, education and service. While we have been serving Bradford and area for 190 years, our story has just begun.

Declining attendance, declining revenues and rising costs brought about the inevitable for the rural churches in the Bradford charge. Automobiles and better roads enabled people to travel greater distances. Two churches closed and their members attended Bradford Presbyterian. The increased membership, together with 110 years of use and a lack of parking, brought about a decision to build a new church home. Sod was turned for that home in November 2004, and the service of dedication held the next November. The more encompassing name of St. John's Presbyterian Church is now used. We are located in the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, about 45 minutes due north of Toronto.



St. John's interior featuring the organ pipes donated by the Carnegie Foundation in 1911.

A woman with reddish-brown hair is looking down at a magazine held by two young children. The child on the left is a girl with light brown hair and a small blue bow. The child on the right is a boy with light brown hair, smiling. The magazine is open, showing a dark page on the left with the headline 'Record Recognized for Excellence' and a lighter page on the right with a landscape photo and the text 'RECO Malawi'.

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PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

APRIL 2011



LOST NO MORE SUDANESE CHILD SOLDIERS FIND PEACE IN CALGARY



SOMETIMES YOU HAVE
TO TAKE THE CROSS
OFF THE WALL.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN
TO BELIEVE IN THE
RESURRECTION?

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Michelle Thompson/agoodson.com

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A Probabilities Test

THE *RECORD* IS THE ONLY MEDIA TO REPORT A GRIM AND TRAGIC STORY. BY DAVID HARRIS

Sexual abuse is grim; sexual abuse in the church is even grimmer, because the church sets high moral standards for its adherents and especially its clergy.

This makes reporting stories about sexual misconduct inherently grim and challenging.

All this is compounded when a child is involved and multiplied again when it involves a parent. What to do then when a story emerges about a minister disciplined over his daughter's complaint that he sexually abused her over a 14-year period beginning when she was two?

What to do when there is no trial, but only the results and recommendation of the initial investigation? When the accused submits to the ordinary jurisdiction of presbytery, with no trial and no direct evidence called or challenged?

Such is the background of the sad news story in this issue concerning Rev. Bruce Cossar and his daughter, Anne Vautour.

Twenty years ago, Ms. Vautour began recalling instances of childhood abuse by her father. These recollections have been shown to be accurate in circumstantial detail and Ms. Vautour is said to exhibit traits consistent with abused women in the therapy she has undergone.

Her father says he has no recollection of any such events.

Of course none of this proves or disproves anything.

Until the 1980s, allegations of abuse in the church were practically unheard of. Around that time, however, stories of abuse by a number of Roman Catholic clergy in Newfoundland began to emerge. They were followed by the tales of horrific abuse at the Mount Cashel



As the only media covering this case, we find ourselves in a difficult position

orphanage that gripped the country.

Shortly after Mount Cashel, in the early 1990s, Canadian churches began to develop protocols for dealing with allegations of abuse. The Presbyterian Church's policy dates from 1993.

The case outlined in this issue has clearly tested the church's system for dealing with such allegations. With no corroborating evidence, the investigating committee spent about 18 months interviewing both the principal parties involved, their family and friends.

Their report also indicates that they spent a great deal of time reading about the subject.

Quite reasonably, decisions of this kind are based on the preponderance of evidence, also known as the balance of probabilities. Reasonably, because an employer or a professional certification association needs to be able to set and enforce a standard for employment or professional standing.

The civil burden of proof, on the balance of probabilities, was famously described by the English judge Lord Denning in 1947 as "more probable than not." That does not mean that it is a simple test of odds, however.

In an important case in 2008, Justice Rothstein, writing a decision for the Supreme Court of Canada, said: "[E]vidence must always be sufficiently clear, convincing and cogent to satisfy the balance of probabilities test."

And that is where reporting this particular story runs into another difficulty. Presbytery was only presented with indirect evidence (the confidential report of the investigating commission) and the court was held in camera. (The *Record* has a copy of the report.) As the only media covering this case, we find ourselves in a difficult position.

On the one hand, part of our job is to help the administration and courts of the church to be as transparent as possible to the wider church. This is one of the fundamental responsibilities of journalism in our society and why a free press is constitutionally protected; transparency assists in accountability.

On the other hand, whichever side one believes is true in this situation, the story exposes a minister and his family to the court of public opinion based on a decision which might well fail the test of natural justice were it reviewed by an appeal to a civil court.

It appears that will not happen. Mr. Cossar told the *Record's* reporter that he thought it pointless to go the church trial route. His daughter said much the same thing in her letter to presbytery two years ago explaining why she hadn't pursued criminal charges against her father, saying she lacked faith in the system and the necessary emotional strength.

All of which makes a grim story even more tragic. ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.4, APRIL 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

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board@presbyterianrecord.ca

ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

Carol McCormick

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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388

Registration No. 09634

Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.

Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government
of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF)
for our publishing activities.

Subscription rates. GST/HST not included.

Every Home Plan: \$19.50

Individual: \$29.50

U.S.A. and foreign: \$39 **Single copies:** \$3.95

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by
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Address all correspondence and changes of address
(include label from magazine) to:

Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Phone: (416) 441-1111; 1-800-619-7301

Fax: (416) 441-2825

E-mail: circulation@presbyterianrecord.ca

Web site: www.presbyterianrecord.ca

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An Onerous Process

Re Minister Censured, February

This news story provided a very good overview of a prolonged and obstinate situation. The article's brevity belies the lengthy and onerous nature of the experience, particularly for members of the Presbytery of East Toronto.

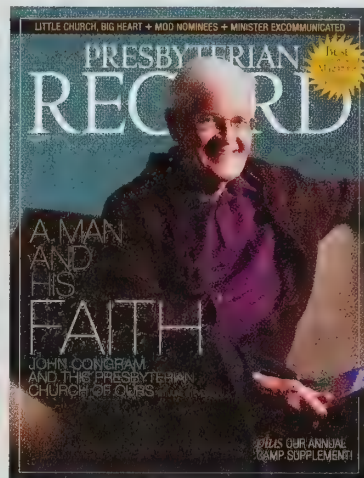
I wish to point out a typo in a quote attributed to me. It should have read, "He labours under utterly tortured logic and arrogance." The claimant's idiosyncratic manner of reasoning was quite puzzling to the various church committees, courts, commissions and especially the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal in his multiple appearances, and resulted in a total failure to make any sort of compelling argument to support his accusation of racial discrimination against the presbytery. Hence, the tribunal's dismissal of all charges.

DANIEL CHO, TORONTO

Extensive publicity is given to the case of an excommunicated minister. Is this consistent with Christian charity and the injunction to love our enemies? Surely a short notice of the special commission's decision would have been sufficient. There is no mention of the possibility that the person concerned may suffer from a mental or emotional disorder.

CHARLES NEILL, EDMONTON

Letters



write to us

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. EMAIL US
YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS ISSUE TO:
LETTERS@PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

The Beauty of Ethnic Diversity

Re The Real McCoy, February

It is not enough to state through (or in response to) an overture that we want to incorporate this rich diversity into our church. We need to take some risks and explore new ways the ethnic diversity in our denomination can be leveraged to transform all of us, regardless of skin colour.

February was Black History month. How enriching it would be to learn how Canadian Presbyterians were ➤

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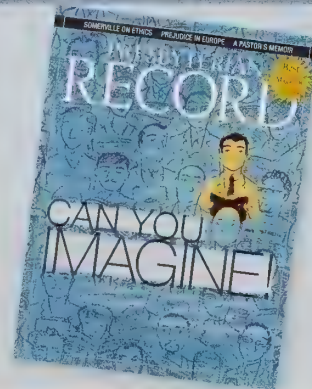
September 2011 issue — by July 15, 2011

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Pontius' Puddle



involved in the history of oppressed black people. What a blessing it would be to hear faith stories from the perspective of black Presbyterians. These stories are not meant to affirm only black people, but all people.

That's the beauty of belonging to an ethnically diverse denomination. The stories of God's saving work among a particular ethnic group becomes the greater denomination's story. Our identity as Presbyterians is shaped by all of our experiences. What an exciting future we as a denomination have ahead of us!

REV. PAUL KANG, TORONTO

Balanced Reporting Needed

Re Going Backwards, January

It was unsettling to see two photographs from the camp at Auschwitz used as illustration in an article about Eastern Europe (and mainly about Hungary). The author decries the prevalence of "old prejudices" which he noticed while travelling in Eastern Europe on a mission trip—which is all the more surprising because this mission trip took him to sites where, in the face of countless hardships, the local church, together with other civil organizations, has established and maintains schools, kindergartens and

church communities specifically for the benefit of the members of Roma communities. This is not to say that such "old prejudices" no doubt rear their heads here or there every now and then, but it would be grossly unjust to declare outright such apparitions to be the norm and widespread in Hungary.

DAVID AND ANNA PANDY-SZEKERES,
HUNGARY

I feel very strongly that balanced reporting is crucial for mutual understanding. To separate Roma and Jews as victims of Hungarians, with the gate "Arbeit Macht Frei" does not help reconciliation but rather furthers division. In the past 1,000 years, Hungary has had a history of integrating all kinds of minorities into their own society, including Roma and Jews.

KALMAN KOVACS, EDMONTON

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Sunday, 3 p.m. Outdoor Service at MacGregor Cairn

Costs of Not Caring

Re Planting Seeds in Prison, February

The article states that it costs \$75 per day to incarcerate a person whereas it costs \$1,000 a day to treat them. I take issue with this statement; other costs involved are not being factored in: The families of the mentally ill who are unable to get treatment for their family member experience turmoil, grief and stress, which undermines their health and adds to health care costs. There is the cost of police intervention (one stand-off cost \$68,000 for one weekend involving 30 police officers), and of repeat police interventions. One man had 69 arrests within a small number of years due to his mental illness.

The human costs are the losses these persons, their families and their victims suffer.

If people knew the costs of dealing with the mentally ill in this way there would be a huge outcry and mental health services would get a lot more support than they do at present.

GEORGE TUCKER, THUNDER BAY, ONT.

A Vision Fulfilled

Re Kortright Raises Thousands, February

I'm thrilled to once again read about the not-too-shabby goings-on at Kortright, which had its beginnings in our backyard Vacation Bible School in 1980. I'm thrilled to pieces to note that Kortright's stewardship commitment of raising funds only by freewill offerings has continued to this day. God has obviously blessed this church from its inception. Thanks to Canada Ministries for its early vision for the South Guelph Presbyterian Church, and to God for calling Bob, me, and our baby daughter, Aimee there to plant it. It was quite a ride for 10 years!

NANCY BETTRIDGE, ONLINE

Journey of Faith

Re The 40-acre Poplar Bush, March

Barb Alston's article is a quiet but profound reflection of that quotation Laurence DeWolfe gives us in the same

issue: "The essential thing ... is that there should be a long obedience in the same direction ..." (Nietzsche). Birth, life and death ... deep joys and sorrows, sadness and happiness ... all of this held safely in the loving hands of our gracious God. It has offered us a peaceful and affirming picture of a faith journey. Well done!

TERRY SAMUEL, KINCARDINE, ONT.

Dare Us All

Re Can You Imagine!, January

Weird is good in the godly sense as our ways are not His. His ways generally take us out of our comfort zones. Strangely in a world that says it prides itself on uniqueness, we get mostly uniformity and boring safety. Dare us all to try being a challenge to others by our own behaviour.

NANCY HOWSE, ONLINE

Beyond Comfort

Re Don't Make God Small, December

I wonder if in enlarging our God we might simultaneously acknowledge that the God of Calvary's endless love is also the God of deadly earthquake and tsunami, and that the God who sees the little sparrow fall also watches the sparrow fall, and indeed causes the sparrow to fall. These are not evil things—that is another topic altogether—but they demand a perception of God and especially of His love that reaches far beyond our present smug comfort zones.

MICHAEL MOORHOUSE, CALGARY ■

online extra

LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED SO MORE VOICES CAN BE SHARED. THE COMPLETE TEXT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE, INCLUDING KALMAN KOVACS' PASSIONATE AND SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO OUR ROMA STORIES FROM JANUARY.

PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA.

BUILDING HOPE



HEALING

Stella Blackbird and Rev. Margaret at Medicine Eagle Camp on Keeseekoowenin First Nations traditional land. The work of healing and reconciliation with Aboriginal people and the Church is an ongoing process.



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Overcome Your Fears

GIVE EVANGELISM A TRY THIS EASTER. BY KIRK MACLEOD

Who would have imagined that putting up a sign reading, “Ask Me About My Church” would cause such discussion?

“A sign on my front lawn advertising my church? Are you serious?” I’m not sure where the hesitation began.

Maybe it started with Queen Esther who was afraid to let anyone know she was a believer. Wherever it began, somehow sharing our faith became as risky as sharing the flu. We’re as afraid of giving our faith away as others are afraid of getting it. I thought then, naively, that a sign would be easier than saying, “How about if I give you a tract and we go door to door—even though the Presbytery of Oakridges actually did this very thing before we began here in Keswick?”

Now that was intimidating! How ominous could a sign be, I thought? We even gave suggestions to participants if people actually asked about their church. The easiest comeback was simply to say, “Why don’t I show you my church? Why don’t you be my guest this Sunday? I will pick you up and you can sit with me.”

But even with this suggestion, only 50 per cent of our congregation would be inspired to participate; and the average was even less in the non-mainline churches in our community that generally seem to be a lot better at this sort of thing than we are. But even they seemed to have some apprehensions.



Then there was a comment by a colleague who said to me after I had told him about the campaign, “I really only have one problem with this. Why do we leave the church off the hook when it comes to evangelism? Why do we expect anyone to ask us about anything? Isn’t that our job?”

I wanted to quickly begin singing the chorus of the unofficial anthem of the Presbyterian Church, *We Are One in the Spirit* and say, but “they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.”

But my friend had a point. Now don’t get me wrong, acts of mercy, justice and love are part of who we are. They’re part of our distinctiveness. Yet acts are sometimes not enough, and thus one reason for our “lack of passionate spirituality” and declining numbers within the PCC.

Please don’t misunderstand me: I don’t see this simple campaign as some miracle cure for the church. But what I am learning is that something like this can cause us to look internally even to the point of inspiring us to act.

Chances are, those of you reading this article grew up in the church and simply “inherited” your faith from

your parents and/or your grandparents. But a new generation with no inheritance is looking to enter our buildings. And if they do make it in, chances are they have come because of a bold invitation by someone else in your church.

Few of us, if we were honest, speak about our faith on a daily basis. Whether we are ashamed, nervous, think people will laugh or believe others will be offended we often remain silent. How many of us can say someone is in our church because we invited them?

So maybe a sign on your front yard is not such a simple thing after all. Maybe those who put up the signs will be transformed as much or more than those who actually asked me about my church. I would love to hear your story. Let’s continue this discussion, shall we, at our churches, on Facebook, and maybe even, dare I say, on our streets? ■

Rev. Kirk MacLeod is co-minister with his wife, Allyson at Keswick, Ont. He extends a challenge to all churches to start the Ask Me About My Church campaign in their community this April during Easter. All you need is the collective will and a lawn sign like the one on this page. MacLeod can be found through the Blue Book, at askmeaboutmychurch.com or on Facebook—(keywords: ask me about my church). Andrew Faiz will return next month.

PWS&D Works to Extend Government Funding

CIDA REJECTS A FIVE-YEAR PROPOSAL, BUT MAY EXTEND CURRENT FUNDING. **BY CONNIE PURVIS**

AS A FIVE-YEAR agreement between Presbyterian World Service and Development and the Canadian International Development Agency drew toward its close, staff at both agencies were working to extend the current funding for another six months.

In a Feb. 23 news release, the church's relief and development arm reported that a new five-year agreement submitted to CIDA in September 2010 had been rejected in December. The new proposal had requested a 10 per cent increase in funding, and was meant to begin when the previous agreement ended on April 1, 2011.

As the *Record* went to press, PWS&D staff were at work on a new funding proposal to be submitted at the end of March. If approved, the new program would begin Oct. 1.

Although no written agreements were in place at press time, Guy Smaghe, PWS&D's government relations officer, said he was "very confident" that CIDA would fund a six-month extension of their current program. If the extension is provided and the new proposal is accepted, no funding gap will occur. "They approached us," he noted. "I think that reflects positively on our track record."

For the past five years, PWS&D received \$458,000 from CIDA each year for programs in El Salvador,

Nicaragua, India, Malawi and Tanzania.

A comprehensive assessment of PWS&D completed by CIDA in June 2010 presented a positive report of the work and administration of the church's agency, and concluded

"In December we received a message from CIDA informing us that they would not be 'retaining our proposal for further consideration'"
— Ken Kim, PWS&D director

that the initiatives it supports are "consistent with CIDA's priorities of poverty reduction and sustainable development."

CIDA has changed its proposal process, PWS&D director Ken Kim told the Life and Mission Agency in March. "CIDA, for many years, has

worked with us as a partner. It means that when we discussed what our programs were, there was a back and forth. So we presented a proposal and they had questions; we responded to those questions. The new call for proposals doesn't allow for that. There's a deadline, and everybody submits according to the criteria published on the CIDA website. They will tell you right away if you don't meet those criteria; there's a minimum entry point. After that, they have four or five months and they will tell you yes or no.

"In December we received a message from CIDA informing us that they would not be 'retaining our proposal for further consideration.'"

On its website CIDA states the new process "will streamline the application process and reduce the administrative burden for project applications, leaving more money for real development work on the ground."

According to PWS&D's year-end report, contributions from individuals and congregations totaled \$4.1 million in 2010, with more than \$1.6 million donated in response to the Haiti earthquake. As the *Record* went to print, PWS&D had issued a Spring Challenge to congregations, hoping to raise \$500,000 to help reduce hunger. ■

Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.

Minister Suspended

PRESBYTERY SUSTAINS DAUGHTER'S ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THE PRESBYTERY OF Kingston has rebuked and suspended a retired minister from all ministerial and pastoral activity based on allegations that he sexually abused his daughter when she was a child.

Anne Vautour, now 49, complained to presbytery in May 2009 that her father, Rev. Bruce Cossar, repeatedly assaulted her for about 14 years from the age of two. That complaint generated an investigation by a committee under the church's Sexual Abuse and Harassment Policy.

After 18 months, the committee presented its findings to an in camera meeting of presbytery and recommended that "on the balance of probabilities, the complaint by Anne Vautour that she was sexually abused

as a child by her father, Bruce Cossar, be substantiated."

The committee also recommended

"If she had made the charges against anyone outside of our family, I would have believed her" —mother, Audrie Cossar

"the presbytery proceed to discipline and depose Bruce Cossar from the

ministry."

Presbytery voted—by a majority of one vote—to substantiate the complaint but declined to depose Cossar. The public extract from the minutes said presbytery "rebukes the behaviour of Bruce Cossar and suspends him from all ministerial and pastoral activity."

Rev. Mark Tremblay, presbytery clerk and advisor to the committee, said he guessed "suspension was chosen because Mr. Cossar is now retired [and] the events happened long before Mr. Cossar began studying for the ministry."

"There was no evidence of issues raised throughout or about his ministry," he said.

Despite the decision, Cossar maintains his innocence. "I have no

A Note About Process

"IT IS THE policy of the Presbyterian Church in Canada that sexual abuse or harassment of any kind by church leaders, staff or volunteers will not be tolerated. All allegations will be taken seriously, and handled according to the terms of this policy."

The church's Sexual Abuse and Harassment Policy, established in 1993, is meant to be used in conjunction with the Book of Forms, though complaints are initially dealt with under the policy.

The policy states, "the committee should do a thorough job, wanting to be fair to both sides," presbytery clerk Rev. Mark Tremblay told the *Record*. "It took as long as it needed to take for the committee to interview and review all the information and go through the process it needed to, to come to a decision ... The more grave the charge, the more in depth the research or investigation should be. I think the time the committee spent was indicative of not only the seriousness of the situation, but the depth of the investigation they did.

"I think two things are important for presbyteries as they seek to judge based on a balance of probabilities. The investigative report is key to aid presbyters in making a fair, informed and adequate decision. It must present the findings and provide the

reasons for their recommendation as it relates to the balance of probability. Secondly, presbyters have to ask questions where there is confusion or uncertainty. With both conditions being met, our church courts are able to make informed decisions."

Balance of Probabilities, a threshold of proof used in civil cases (as opposed to criminal cases, which rest on "beyond reasonable doubt") was famously described by British judge Lord Denning as "more probable than not." Tribunals often use this standard of proof.

In a presbytery, parties involved in a case are not always represented by a lawyer, nor do the accused face their accusers. Presbyters listen to each testimony and are encouraged to ask questions. If anyone is unsatisfied with the result reached under the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Policy, they can request a formal trial under the Book of Forms.

"Any time you're in a situation like this it's difficult," said presbytery moderator, Rev. Jennifer Cameron. "You work within the process we have and that's all we can do, and we hope we do that well. I would hope that presbyteries would recognize the difficult nature of these issues and be aware of the emotion involved." ■

fear of judgment day," he told the *Record*. "We all will be held accountable for something, but for me, this will not be on the list because it never happened."

When asked why someone would persist in such claims if they weren't true, Cossar was at a loss. "Apart from the fact that she thoroughly believes it happened, I can't understand why. We don't understand it."

Cossar's wife, Audrie, declined to comment to the *Record*. However, she is quoted in the committee's confidential report to presbytery as telling the church investigative team: "If [Anne] had made the charges against anyone outside of our family, I would have believed her."

Cossar was not ordained a minister until 1985, after the time the abuse is said to have occurred, although he became an elder during the period in question in 1969.

Cossar waived his right to a church trial. In an interview he said: "I didn't agree, but I didn't appeal. I didn't see any point to it." Cossar retired in 2005 from Knox, Westport, Ont.

"I guess we're just trying to put it behind us," he said.

In an interview, Vautour said she is satisfied with the verdict, even though she was hoping her father would be deposed.

According to the church's investigation, Vautour's memories of the abuse first surfaced about 20

years ago when she was working with children in her job. Shortly after, she raised the issue in a letter to her parents in January 1992.

They responded by letter in March denying the allegations.

Talk of the abuse then "disappeared," according to Cossar, and the family thought the allegations had been laid to rest.

But the following year, Vautour filed for compensation with the Ontario Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. The board's confidential report states: "The board has given very careful consideration to all the evidence and finds, on a balance of probabilities that the applicant was [sexually assaulted]..."

It did not seek any evidence from Vautour's father, who was unaware of the finding until recently.

It was not until May 2009 that Vautour complained to the church. In a letter to the Presbytery of Kingston, she sought church discipline against her father for the assaults.

She told the *Record* the desire to do something about the abuse was triggered when she saw her father hugging his granddaughter during a family event, saying: "it troubled me."

As required by the church's sexual abuse policy, presbytery launched a committee to investigate Vautour's claim. The committee began its work in June 2009, interviewing Bruce and Audrie Cossar, Anne Vautour and her

siblings, as well as other friends and family.

After 14 meetings and long deliberations, the committee accepted Vautour's claim, citing Cossar's lack of empathy, discrepancies between his and his wife's stories and the delay in the Cossars responding to Anne's first allegations.

The committee also noted as reasons for their decision Cossar's failure to remember certain major family events, the decision of the compensation board, and Vautour's current emotional symptoms, which are consistent with women who were abused as children.

Vautour left the family home when she was 17 years old to go to college. She has since suffered extended periods of mental and emotional deterioration. She has spent years in therapy with several Christian therapists. It was while she was working with children, and through later therapy, that memories of the abuse began to surface.

She still goes to church, not Presbyterian, and while she didn't totally lose faith over the years, she "certainly struggled with God and how He fit in to all of this."

She has come to the conclusion, "that God puts us on earth and stuff happens, and He gives us the resources to deal with it. But He doesn't necessarily intervene." ■

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.

PCC Rallies for Japan

BY CONNIE PURVIS

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD Service and Development began accepting donations for relief work in Japan days after an earthquake and tsunami struck the island's coast.

As the *Record* went to press, PWS&D reported that its partners are assessing the humanitarian needs in afflicted areas.

The Presbyterian Church also called for prayers for those affected. In a prayer published online on March 11, the day of the disaster, the church held up the people of Japan, partner churches, PCC missionaries in Taiwan, the Japanese government and international church aid agencies. ■



Just over a week after a massive earthquake and tsunami struck Japan on March 11, police estimated the death toll will exceed 18,000.

Community News

No Unpaid Leave at Wynford

NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF were told in March that an unpaid week off for 2011 will not be necessary. The week was part of the church's plan to make up for a budget shortfall due largely to a decrease in givings to Presbyterians Sharing.

"While Presbyterians Sharing showed a decrease at the end of 2010, that was offset by restraint in expenditures from the office," said an email sent to staff by the management team. The resulting \$103,000 surplus meant the \$55,000 that would have

The \$55,000 that would have been saved in salaries and utilities was no longer needed

been saved in salaries and utilities was no longer needed.

The management team—the church's principal clerk, the chief financial officer and the general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency—recommended to Assembly Council last November that the week off not be implemented in 2011 if budget numbers were healthy. The council's finance committee reviewed the figures in March, and accepted the recommendation. ■—AM

Seniors Get New Residence

A NEW SENIORS' residence in St. Lambert, Que., will be a site for cooperation among local churches.

The project is targeted at the English-speaking community in St. Lambert—something Rev. Barry Mack, minister at St. Andrew's, St. Lambert, suggested, noticing that elderly anglophone parishioners were having difficulty finding a place to live. Mack approached Fergus Groundwater, a member of the congregation and chairman of the St. Andrew's

Presbyterian Homes Foundation (an independent organization).

The congregation will be involved by drawing the various churches in St. Lambert into ecumenical ministry at the building's Heritage Gardens, which will feature a "green" rooftop dining area—the first of its kind in the area. An ecumenical chapel will incorporate elements from the Lutheran church that once stood on the grounds, and artistic projects will link the various churches to the residence.

The 93-unit residence is slated to open in November. ■—AM

Geddie Hosts Arts Retreat

EXTREME WINTER WEATHER didn't stop 30 people from attending Camp Geddie's Discover the Arts retreat in February. Located in Nova Scotia, the camp has been holding theme retreats for 13 years.

The retreat focused on prayer through creativity. During worship, participants reflected on scripture using clay and mosaics. Dawn MacNutt, a local artist and sculptor who attended Camp Geddie as a child, shared her insight with the group. "Dawn offered great passion and genuineness to prayer in art form," said Audrey Cameron, Geddie's executive director.

Three local crafts people offered instruction in photography, painting and woodcarving. "By the end of the afternoon, self-portraits were hanging on walls, wood shavings filled the room and red-cheeked photographers were comparing shots they had taken in a walk around the site," said Cameron. ■—AM

TRC Wants Staff Stories

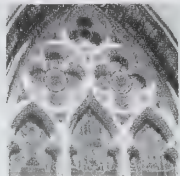
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S Truth and Reconciliation Commission is asking former teachers and staff of the country's residential schools to share their memories.

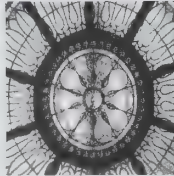
"Residential school staff can provide us with a unique insight into the operation of the schools, the relationship between students and staff, and the day to day challenges of working in difficult circumstances," said Justice Murray Sinclair, the commission's chair, in a letter to churches.

"A better understanding of the experiences of former staff will help us prepare a more comprehensive history

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Kairos Addresses House Committee

KAIROS GOT A GLIMPSE into Minister of International Cooperation Bev Oda's reasoning for denying their CIDA funding when she addressed a standing committee of the House of Commons on March 18. They were gathered to determine whether or not Oda is guilty of a breach of privilege.

Oda admitted her explanations regarding a handwritten "Not" inserted onto the letter that originally approved Kairos' \$7-million proposal had created confusion, but maintained that the proposal no longer fit with CIDA's priorities. She noted while the application had many positive aspects, "\$880,000 was to be used for advocacy, training, media strategies and campaign activities here in Canada," saying it wasn't "the best way to spend public funds."

"We're surprised she has issues with this," Jennifer Henry, manager of Kairos' Rights and Dignity Team, told the *Record*. "This is what we call, and what CIDA calls, 'public engagement.' It increases awareness and education of Canadians on international



Remy Fu-Tam, an elder in the Presbytery of Westminster and convener of the Social Justice Action Committee, shows her support for Kairos at a presbytery mission event in March.

development issues. Best practices show this is an essential part of development work."

Henry said if CIDA had communicated these issues to Kairos "in a clear and timely way," they could have altered the proposal, or at least had a chance to discuss the problem. Instead, a brief phone call on Nov. 30, 2009—eight months after the proposal was first submitted—informed executive director, Mary Corkery that the proposal was denied.

Oda told the committee she felt Kairos operated on a sense of "entitlement," assuming their funding was all but guaranteed.

"Kairos has never had a sense of entitlement," said Corkery, speaking to the committee. "But we do expect a timely and substantial response to applications, and in this case, we didn't get that."

Kairos was denied funding after a 35-year relationship with CIDA. They submitted a new proposal in March 2010, but have not yet heard if it has been approved. ■ —AM

of the residential school system."

The TRC will arrange for an interview with an experienced statement-gatherer. Participants are assured their stories will be treated with respect.

Interested individuals can contact Helen Harrison: helen.harrison@trc.ca or 613-947-1093; or Stephen Kendall, the PCC's principal clerk, at skendall@presbyterian.ca. ■ —AM

News Bites

- Evangel Hall Mission raised \$18,000 at its Compassionate Hearts gala on Feb. 12 at the Fairmount Royal York Hotel in Toronto.
- The Presbytery of Halifax and Lunenburg held an 'Epiphany party' in January, bringing 41 people to the home of presbytery clerk Rev. Sandy McDonald for an informal social gathering. It was inspired by a discussion with delegates from the Emmaus conference.
- As the *Record* went to press, faculty and librarians at the Atlantic School of Theology were poised to strike if parties at a bargaining session on March 21 failed to reach an agreement. ■



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College Convocations

SENDING STUDENTS INTO THE WORLD.

KNOX COLLEGE, TORONTO

Date: May 11

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Convocation Hall,
University of Toronto

**Recipients of honorary doctorates
of divinity:**

- Guest speaker: Dr. Reinerio Acre Valentin, president of the Seminario Evangelico de Teologica in Matanzas, Cuba.
- Rev. Karen Bach, mission and ministry program officer at Evergreen Centre, part of Yonge Street Mission, and a driving force behind the creation of the University of Toronto's ecumenical chaplaincy.
- Rev. Cheol Soon Park, moderator

of the 134th assembly and the church's first Korean moderator, and minister at Korean Vancouver.

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, MONTREAL

Date: May 12

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul

Speaker: Rev. Terry LeBlanc, executive director of My People International, co-founder and chair of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies and the church's 2010 E. H. Johnson Award winner.

**Recipient of an honorary doctorate
of divinity:** Rev. Murdock J. MacRae, longtime minister in Cape Breton, N.S., and current minister at the

three-point charge of Grand River, St. Andrew's, Framboise, and Calvin, Loch Lomond.

ST. ANDREW'S HALL, VANCOUVER

Date: May 9

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Christ Church Cathedral,
Vancouver



WORLD NEWS WILL RETURN NEXT MONTH

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission

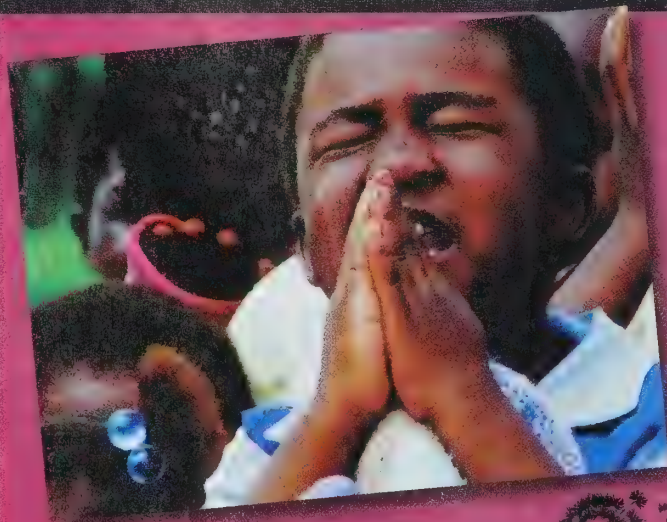


Photo credit: Karen Plater

provisionaries
Planting seeds of hope. For generations to come.

A young girl prays at the Ajatsa school, a mission school supported by The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi. The newly established Living Links Missionary Endowment Fund will ensure that the PCC continues to have long-term mission staff in the field to work alongside our mission partners in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect. Together we are God's servants growing and expanding the mission of the church for generations to come.

What will your legacy be...

To learn more about the Mission Priority Funds and how your planned gifts can make a lasting difference, visit

www.presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving

The Other Six Days Tools for Doing Church

RESOURCES FOR WORK AND PLAY. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

ONLINE LECTURES

Harvard Divinity School Lectures are available online in various formats; you can watch/listen to them without having to pay the high cost of tuition. Check out Howard Stevenson's "What's Enough? A Conversation Between Harvard Business School and Harvard Divinity School (April 2010)."

FIND IT @ hds.harvard.edu/news/events_online/whatsenough.html

FAITH PRACTICES

From the United Church of Christ comes a whole new way of doing Sunday school. With a more "emergent" feel, this new curriculum has great activities. What makes this worth mentioning? It's non-linear in format and fully available online, so Sunday school teachers can choose activities to suit their needs, and it's geared towards the more tech-savvy generation. Oh, and it includes the work of a certain gifted writer serving as minister at First, Regina.

FIND IT @ ucc.org/education/practices

BOOK

Former PBS executive Bob Reed was raised in the Methodist Church but has since moved on to the denomination known for doing things "decently and in good order." In his latest book, *How to Survive Being a Presbyterian!: A Merry Manual Celebrating the Funny Foibles of the Frozen Chosen*, Reed examines what it means to be a part of the Presbyterian Church (USA). As Reed puts it, "Presbyterianism is a series of meetings occasionally interrupted by a worship service." The book is clever and insightful and speckled with witty interjections by Percy T. Presby, the book's cartoon narrator.

FIND IT @ amazon.com

DENOMINATIONS IDENTIFIED

For whatever reason, the people at Comic Book Religion decided to catalog comic book characters and other famous figures by their religious affiliations. According to the site, while the Anglicans have Holmes' esteemed Dr. Watson, Presbyterians can boast to having everyone from David Letterman to New Mutant's Wolfsbane as well as 50 per cent of cartoon mega-stars *The Simpsons* who attend the fictitious "Presbylutheran" church.

FIND IT @ comicbookreligion.com

BIOETHICS

From the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity comes an interesting article entitled "Does Alien Hand Syndrome Refute Free Will?" about the relationship between neuroscience and human nature.

FIND IT @ cbhd.org/content/does-alien-hand-syndrome-refute-free-will ■

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

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A Lot to Learn

MIDWIFERY IN MALAWI IS A BEAUTIFUL CHALLENGE FOR A YOUNG MISSIONARY. **BY ELLEANA HOEKSTRA**



Women, who have become guardians of infants, learn to care for their babies at Mulanje Mission Hospital in Malawi; the author helping a newborn.

I'VE BEEN JOURNALING diligently since I arrived in Malawi last October. One of my new year's resolutions was to share my experiences as an important part of my reflection and growth. Looking back at my first journal entry, it is full of anticipation, apprehension and excitement. I had nine months ahead of me where I would be learning, growing and experiencing the unknown—a clean slate!

October in Malawi is the hottest time of year and I was sweating before we landed. I had travelled to Africa twice before, but this time felt like such a long journey. Two days of planes, busses, airports, terrible food and way too much T.V., and we had finally arrived. The first couple weeks hit me like a ton of bricks—leaving the familiar, the safe,

the known and jumping into this new culture as a woman, I suddenly felt like my freedom had been stripped from me. I could no longer drive myself wherever I wanted to go, walk alone at night, or have my knees exposed. I felt like a caged bird; the gender inequality affected me immediately and I didn't like it.

The reunion was such a wonderful moment. It had been 14 months since I had seen my mom and dad (missionaries Rev. Ed and Jackie Hoekstra) and I fell into their arms and didn't want to let go. The saying, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" is so true. I love them so much and I take them for granted! As the weeks went by it was fun to share stories and experiences from the year that had been missed.

Getting my midwife certification in Malawi was more difficult than I anticipated. I had to travel to Lilongwe (Malawi's capital) which is a four-hour bus ride away to speak to the Nurses and Midwives Council of Malawi, have an interview, show them my Canadian certification and pay a fee. Everything went smoothly and I started my two weeks' orientation at a government hospital in Blantyre the next week.

On my first day, I was thrown into the labour ward and resuscitated two babies. Queen Elizabeth hospital has an average of 19 births per day so it is busy! I was supposed to have someone orient me to the labour ward but everyone was too busy so I was left alone to find babies to catch. There was no stethoscope to be found so I was happy that I had brought my baby one with me for the resuscitations.

It is difficult to put into words the impressions from those first two weeks. The hospital felt like a baby mill, and I struggled with watching midwifery practices that were outdated and unreasonable while trying to remain accepting and non-judgmental. I kept wondering what these women thought of me—this white girl from Canada trying to tell them about having babies in Malawi. The truth is that I have so much more to learn from them—I have no idea what it is like to be a young woman in Malawi faced with challenges such as lack of education, gender inequality, HIV/AIDS, access to birth control ... I know so little.

The biggest challenge of those first two weeks was watching routine, unnecessary episiotomies and fighting to steal the scissors away whenever I felt the procedure wasn't required. I realized it was a race against the clock; getting these women through the door so there was enough room for the next

woman to give birth. The result being if you couldn't push your baby out fast enough, you would get rushed into intervention practices regardless of the consequences.

The highlight of those two weeks was on my last day when my mom came to pick me up and I was with a woman who was about to give birth so I said, "Mom, come in here. We're about to have a baby!" My mom helped me bring a new baby into the world and then another one. We were providing labour support to a first-time mom who was really scared and my mom was helping hold up her legs while I was helping her push—it was such an amazing experience for us to share together. ■

Elleana Hoekstra is a PCC young adult intern working in Malawi as a midwife for eight months. She is a member of Coldwater Presbyterian Church. Part two of Elleana's journal will appear in May.

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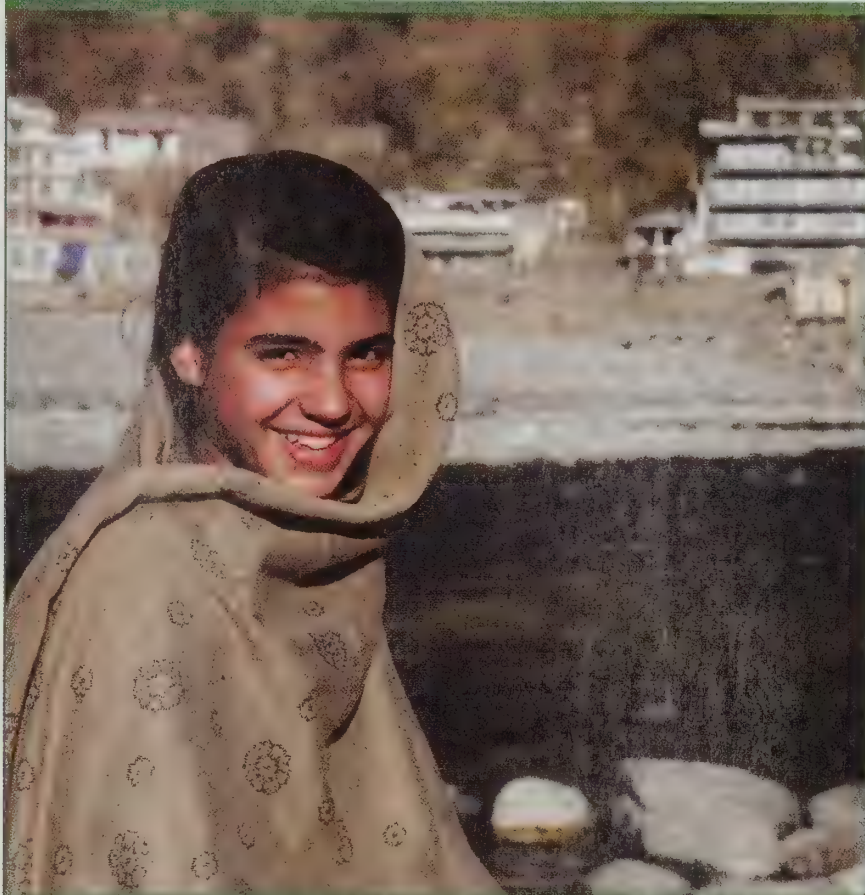
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Investing in the Future, After the Floods



Months have passed since the devastating monsoon floods hit Pakistan, and millions of people are still struggling to rebuild their lives.

PWS&D is working to help more than 500,000 people access food, emergency supplies and healthcare. Providing seeds and agricultural support is allowing farmers to plant crops and grow food for the future.

Please help continue this important work by remembering victims of the Pakistan floods in your prayers and with your financial support. To read the latest updates, download videos and access resources, visit www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/pakistan-floods.

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Letter from Tanzania



We Are Thankful

DROUGHT-WEARY FARMERS ARE GRATEFUL FOR CHURCH AID. BY KEN KIM

"KILIMANJARO? SERENGETI? NGORON-GORO CRATER?"

"No," I responded to a fellow traveler at the Dar es Salaam airport. I had been visiting Shinyanga, a less-frequented region of Tanzania.

Just a day earlier I was in the drought-affected Kishapu district of Shinyanga, visiting communities where Presbyterian World Service and Development and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank will provide food assistance until the summer harvest.

Kishapu district usually experiences two rainy seasons: *mvuli* or short rains, and *masika* or long rains. The *mvuli* rains usually begin by November, and farmers plant crops then for a February harvest. The *masika* rains usually begin by March, when farmers plant another set of crops for an August harvest.

Last year, the short rains in Kishapu

began in November but stopped after only two days. Many farmers had planted maize and other crops, which are now stunted or completely dried up. Farmers experienced the double loss of both their *mvuli* harvest and their seeds.

In response, PWS&D and CFGB will support 11,400 people in Kishapu district by providing maize, beans, oil and salt through our local partner, the Africa Inland Church of Tanzania. As part of the program, 250 farmers will be trained on climate adaptation and mitigation strategies related to drought. Each of these 250 farmers are in turn expected to pass on the training to five other farmers.

At a gathering in the Mayanji village of Kishapu, the 100 villagers present apologized for the small number that gathered to meet us. They said most of

the men left the community seeking work as casual labourers to earn money to buy food for their families. They explained they are thankful when they are able to afford a one-kilogram bag of maize flour because there are days when a family has nothing. On those days, edible plants are gathered for a meagre soup. Any grain stored after the harvest last August is now depleted, and seeds held in reserve were either planted in November—with an almost total loss—or have been consumed as food. When I asked how many people only ate one meal a day, the majority raised their hands; the remainder raised their hands at two meals a day. Thankfully, the World Food Program is providing grains for a primary school feeding program in Mayanji.

The second community of Miyugyu appears even worse off. The land is almost desert-like in some areas. In this community there is no school feeding program and the villagers expressed concern, especially for the elderly, widows and the ill.

In both communities I was struck by the obviously lean appearance of the men who are farmers. Similarly, the very lean livestock was another reminder of lack of water and resulting lack of vegetation for grazing. Villagers report that the price of cattle and goats has fallen significantly, in many cases to less than half of what they were.

The villagers of Mayanji and Miyugyu expressed thanks to the church in Canada who will help them get through these difficult times. "Tell them we are thankful, for God blesses you to bless us." ■

Ken Kim is Director of Presbyterian World Service & Development.



Women of Miyugyu village, Tanzania, gather to welcome visitors.



PART ONE

The Note of Victory

BELIEVING IN THE RESURRECTION. BY HARRIS ATHANASIADIS

What does it mean to believe in the resurrection? Some of you may be surprised to know that both the Bible and the earliest confessions of the church

are in majority agreement as to what it means. The resurrection is the centrepiece of a worldview that includes all time and space, all life and meaning. It is about the world and about us humans in the world. It is about the joining of heaven and

earth, the renewal of creation and a future where death is no more. It is about hope, but a hope that requires faith to be activated. It is about the victory of love over the forces of hate and indifference that seem to hold so much sway in the world we ►

For most Jews in Jesus' day, a person's spirit could not be separated from his or her body. We are a psycho-spiritual-physical unity. To be resurrected in spirit without a body is no resurrection at all

know and inhabit. So what does it mean to believe in the resurrection?

First, the resurrection is about all of us, not just part of us. "I believe in the resurrection of the body," the Apostles' Creed tells us. For most Jews in Jesus' day, a person's spirit could not be separated from his or her body. We are a psycho-spiritual-physical unity. To be resurrected in spirit without a body is no resurrection at all. And the earliest confessions claim the resurrection of the body over and against broader Hellenistic views of the immortality of the soul without need of a body. Even though it is easier to believe in a resurrection that is "spiritual" (i.e. with no body to worry about), the Bible and the earliest confessions go to great lengths to emphasize that the resurrection includes the body. Why?

To begin with, Jesus rose again in a body. I realize this is easier stated than believed. But let us not mistake what the earliest witnesses confess explicitly. The risen Jesus given us in the gospels is one who is very physical, and he demonstrates that he is no phantom by eating, touching

and being touched, and showing the marks of his wounds so that it is clear that it is he and not some lookalike.

Even after doing all this, his disciples still have a hard time believing it is him. The difficulty is not so much the physicality of the resurrection. As already mentioned, most Jews believed that any credible resurrection had to be physical. Rather, the difficulty is the witness of someone being resurrected in the midst of history, the midst of time. Nobody had ever thought or imagined that, and so, the disbelief, disorientation and bewilderment of the early witnesses.

At the same time, the risen Christ is also different. Most Jews understood that the resurrection of the body had to have a spiritual component to it because existing bodies were subject to decay and death. Jesus is the same physical-spiritual person, yet different also. His body is the same body, yet also possesses properties that are not subject to decay and death.

Now even as I write this I realize it sounds crazy. How is this possible? It is only possible if the witnesses are right. How could they be? Let us not confuse the challenge of believing such things from the consistency of what is confessed. The resurrection is about the body as much as it is about the spirit. We are a unity.

Our distinctive identities include our physical senses as much as our minds, emotions and spirits, our faces as much as our values. But clearly, according to biblical testimony, the limitations of bodily-ness do not have to include decay and death. Decay and death are a consequence of the fall, however we understand that. They are not part of the creational intention or goal of God. I do not have space here to cite chapter and verse in the scriptures to show this is what is confessed.

Finally, however, we must ask: does it make a difference if the resur-

rection includes the body or not? How is such a confession linked to our hope as Christians? I began by stating that the resurrection is the centrepiece of a whole world view. Creation and re-creation with the fall and redemption in the middle are movements of a larger historical/spiritual symphony if you will. Heaven is not the final note but an interim movement.

The final note is the joining of heaven to earth, a recreation/completion of the work God began with creation and has continued throughout, all of it very good. Jesus' resurrection sounds the note of victory. With this event and the gift of the Spirit which flows from it, we as Christians live out of the end in the midst of time.

Jesus is a prototype of the new creation, a creation for which all existence longs and awaits with patience in the midst of suffering. Our task as believers and as communities of faith is to implement the seeds of the new creation in this world of decay and death, evil, injustice, pain and suffering. We are here to declare in our actions and relationships that the structures of this world in so far as they breed inequality and injustice are part of the decay and death that is passing away.

We are declaring that God's kingdom in Christ has already begun to reveal itself, and we are its citizens and proclaimers in word and deed. All creation, spirit and body, needs redemption. Resurrection is about all that is, because all that is, is good in so far as it is. Evil is an unwelcome intruder. Its destiny is banishment forever.

Do we believe this? "Lord I believe, help my unbelief"... especially when I am overwhelmed by the anguish in our world." Amen. ■

Rev. Harris Athanasiadis is minister at St. Mark's, Don Mills, Toronto.



PART TWO

Giddy Confusion

EMBRACING THE MEANING OF THE RESURRECTION.

BY IAN FRASER

Life

is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived, according to Søren Kierkegaard.

What is true about life is just as true about the resurrection. When the resurrection is approached as a problem that can be solved, the most important question becomes, "Did it really happen?"

But when the resurrection is a

mystery to be lived, the question becomes, "What does it mean?" We are invited to hear again the shocking news proclaimed by Mary when she ran back to the other disciples: "We have seen the Lord!"—and to live these words as our own. We are invited into what Joan Chittester calls "the giddy confusion" of the resurrection.

That is, after all, what Jesus' disciples did. The disciples of Good Friday found themselves in the hopeless certainty that Jesus, and the gospel ➤

But when the resurrection is a mystery to be lived, the question becomes, "What does it mean?"

Like gazing at the sun, we are better not to look directly at the resurrection to think that we can solve it. Instead, search around the edges

he incarnated, were dead, sealed forever in a tomb of stone. All that Jesus stood for had been defeated.

But three days later, their lives had been transformed. Whatever occurred that day convinced them that Jesus was greater than everything that the forces of evil had imposed on him. All attempts to contain him had failed. Jesus and his gospel were alive forever.

Like gazing at the sun, we are better not to look directly at the resurrection to think that we can solve it. Instead, search around the edges. The risen Christ kept appearing in unlikely places and in unlikely ways. Mary thought she was speaking to a gardener. The two unnamed disciples thought that a stranger was walking with them to Emmaus. Others saw him as a lonely figure standing on the shore of Lake Galilee calling out to them to put their nets on the other side of the boat. The risen one comes to us similarly when and in whom we least expect it.

The resurrection is really the beginning place for our faith, not the end. Without it, Jesus would have faded into the pages of history. He would have no more lasting impact than countless

other itinerant preachers and healers who walked the dusty roads of first-century Palestine. Some of his wisdom was borrowed from others, some of his actions were claimed by others. But because of the resurrection, we now must look at his life from a completely different perspective. Welcoming the outcast, loving the enemy, giving freedom to the oppressed, calling the poor in spirit and meek "blessed"—these are no longer the musings of a madman but the way to life itself, sanctioned by God.

To live the mystery of the resurrection is to live with the unquenchable hope that death is not the ultimate reality that defines us. Neither are violence, hatred, prejudice, apathy, insecurity, or any of the other manifestations of death that we encounter every day. Rather it is life that is God's final word for us, revealed in the resurrection of Christ.

To live the mystery of the resurrection is to live with the faith that the doors to the tombs of self doubt and distrust, as well as all the other limitations and boundaries that hem us in, have been blown off their hinges and we have been invited by Christ to walk

into the freedom of new life.

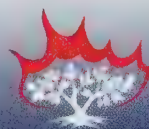
For some, the resurrection points mainly to a reality beyond death and to the promise of life eternal for all who believe. However, for the apostle Paul, the meaning of resurrection is in the present. "You have been raised to life with Christ," he wrote. It was not news for a few but for all. It did not depend on a person's goodness but on grace. If only we all knew that we were raised with him, what a difference it would make! As Coldplay sang a few years ago, "I don't want to battle from beginning to end. I don't want to cycle, recycle revenge. I don't want to follow death and all of his friends."

Several years ago, I helped a friend of mine build a large pen in his backyard to house their new puppy. They trained Dusty to go out the door of their house and into the pen. They would then close the door behind him so that they didn't need to be on constant watch. After two years, they found that they no longer needed to close the door, as the dog would enter his pen and never think of leaving it, having accepted that enclosure as the boundaries for his life. What about us? Are we pinned inside the fences of the rational still trying to problem solve? Is the risen Christ calling us into the wild, the unknown, the giddy confusion where we can live the mystery of resurrection life? ■

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Rev. Ian Fraser is minister at St. Columba by the Lake, Pointe Claire, Que.

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People of God

THREE REASONS WHY PEWS ARE EMPTYING; ONE REASON THEY SHOULDN'T.

BY CALVIN BROWN

I recently had an opportunity to speak with a young man at his grandmother's funeral. He was wrestling with issues of faith and of knowing.

Earlier in the month I had spoken to the spouse of an active church member and he pointedly told me he had been forced to go to church in his youth by a very strict guardian and he had no intention of ever going again.

On more than one occasion I've

been told that you don't have to go to church to be a Christian. I used to think that was patently false. Now I think it is just sad. It is sad because the church isn't a place most people want to go to anymore.

Statistics show church attendance continues to drop and even those who are considered regular attendees only show up once or twice a month. At first we blamed junior sports teams and then Sunday shopping, both of which

occupied people at the hour of worship. The temptation to accept the work or to play the game seemed too great.

The deeper question we never seemed to ask was, why were people choosing to do other things with their Sundays than go to church?

Three things come to mind.

First, there are the seekers like the first young man I spoke to. He is earnest about the search but he has been taught in his education that ►

he is responsible for discovering truth. He no doubt goes on the worldwide web to seek various opinions and has a world of different points of view and philosophies to draw from. It doesn't occur to him that the church has a lot to offer in his search.

I've heard some say that we don't teach like they like to learn. We are still producing catechisms that have set questions and answers. It isn't that I don't believe in the value of catechizing or of memory work, but we need to know that these tools are mostly useful for those already in the faith who already accept the value of the church's experience and authority.

Secondly, there are those like the man who was wounded by the legalism and sense of duty foisted upon him at an early age. Others have been wounded by the members or leaders of the church, or have been caught up

in conflict within the church and have abandoned it in despair.

They see the church as hypocritical—as teaching love but acting without kindness.

We need to remember Jesus' words: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." Each of us needs to be willing to do the inconvenient work of mending fences if we don't want the sheep to run away.

Thirdly, the church needs to demonstrate a quality of life that is attractive to all who love life. An early Christian father once wrote: "The glory of God is man fully alive." We need to show the world that kind of glory. We will need to recover our sense of identity as ambassadors for Christ. We will need to demonstrate that, as Peter called us, we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that we may

declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

It is time for us to call out for mercy again; it is time for us to be renewed in the Spirit of God again. It is time for us to stop living no differently than the world and live in our identity as God's holy people.

When we become the people we ought to be, I believe belonging to the community of the church will become the priority more and more for those who want to know and serve God. ■

Calvin Brown is executive director of the Renewal Fellowship. For more information, go to renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca

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Entombment by Rogier van der Weyden,
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Watch and See

BECAUSE HE LIVED, HE DIED. BECAUSE HE LIVED, WE LIVE.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

April 17 reading:
Liturgy of the Passion

Matthew 26:14-27:66
or Matthew 27:11-54

What language shall I borrow? What can we say? How can we—how dare we—add anything to what we have just read? For almost 2,000 years, we Christians have advanced complicated explana-

tions of the events Matthew relates in our long gospel reading.

You've heard, and preached, some of those explanations:

- Jesus died to offer the kind of pure blood sacrifice that God demanded, to persuade God not to be angry with the world.
- Jesus died to pay the price, to buy the world—and us—back from the devil.
- Jesus accepted death, in perfect obedience to God. We can't be perfectly obedient. Jesus had to do

it on our behalf.

- Jesus died because we deserve to die, but we're not good enough to make that sacrifice. Jesus took your place, and mine, on the cross.

All of these interpretations can be read out of and into the Bible. We sing them all in our hymns, whether we accept them or not. All bear truth. None is sufficient in itself. What if we stick to the story today? Maybe there's something really simple behind the running commentary the gospels give us. Underneath Matthew's ►

proof-texting from the prophets.

Jesus died. No denying that. Jesus lived. No denying that. Something about him, what he did and said led those who had power to kill him, to kill him.

Because he lived, he died. That's not the end of his story, but that's our story for today.

People with power to do it killed Jesus, because of the way he lived. Just as people with power to do it have always done, when good people challenge them, offend them, threaten them.

That's the best illustration of the sin of the world I can think of. You and I live in this world, and it sticks to us like Velcro. Because he lived, he died.

Take the gospel story as a whole. It's his life, his living that saves us. It's his life, his living that keeps us coming back to him. The way that led him to death is the path to life for us.

Why would we choose a way that

doesn't protect us, spare us from dying? A way that calls us to die to self and selfishness along the way.

Why live his way, as Christians in the world? Because, along the way, we find God. Jesus knew communion with the One he called "Father," all along the way. We see God in him. We enjoy that same communion as we walk in his way.

His words and his ways judge us in our sinfulness, and offer us forgiveness. Accuse us in our hypocrisy, and affirm our integrity. Purge us of hatred, and fill us with love.

The people who killed him—Roman rulers and Judean leaders, state and church, those who claimed to know God and those whose emperor claimed to be God—are that part of all of us that rebels when God is revealed.

That self in us that turns away from undeniable truth. That spirit in

us that seeks, and loves, power and all the illusions power rests on, and feeds. That is Sin, with a capital S. The way of Jesus confronts it head-on. If that confrontation leads to a cross, so be it. Bring it on.

Jesus lived, and died, a witness to the faithfulness of God. Every breath, even his last, a revelation to us. That's why we can't take our eyes off him. Even as we watch him suffer and die. We watch and see that God is not defeated, and we are not lost, even though all seems lost. For a time.

Through this Holy Week, watch, and see. Listen, and hear. Know only this: Because he lived, he died. Because he lived, we live. Because he lives, we will live, even though we die. ■

Rev. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.

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House Calls

GOD'S GRACE IN THE CARIBOO.

BY SHANNON BELL

I look around the living room as we sing, smiling at those who are gathered in worship and friendship. We have variations in skin colour, age, education and economic status, but in the circle we are all the same—sisters and brothers in the family of Jesus. In the circle, all the distinctions fall away and together we worship and pray, seeking to know and love the Creator more deeply.

I am in the house church in Ndazkoh. It is so different from Punchaw, Williams Lake or McLeese Lake and all the other house churches that make up the Cariboo Presbyterian Church. Each of them is unique because the people who make

up each circle are different in every community. If variety is the spice of life, then we are a zesty congregation.

At the same time, we are no different in many ways from other congregations spread across this vast piece of land we call home. We seek to faithfully walk the way of Jesus in our lives among our communities in the hope that others will join us in the journey and experience the healing, joy and anticipation of eternity that helps us walk forward. We sing, we pray, we study the word, we comfort and congratulate one another, and we mark the significant events in one another's lives. And we share the gifts of God, which are for the people of God.

**We sing, we pray,
we study the word,
we comfort and
congratulate one
another, and we
mark the significant
events in one
another's lives**

The last song fades as we pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit to help us understand the scripture that we are going to read and study. Some people who can read open their ►

We find healing and hope at the table, and now come in prayer to ask for it for specific situations in our lives and in our world

Bibles, others get ready to listen. Thirty minutes later, after a message and discussion, the Bibles are set aside and we prepare to share in one of the gifts the Creator has given us to mark us as followers of Christ.

On the coffee table sits a wooden plate with a fresh piece of bannock. Next to it, in a wooden chalice, is grape juice and small cups of the same on another wooden plate. I nod to Geraldine who begins to read from a paper in her hand: "This is the Lord's table. Together we remember, celebrate and look forward ... This table gives us a little taste of what Jesus suffered, of what it means to follow him and be part of his family, and of what it will be like to live with him in heaven."

Rosie passes a stick to Geraldine who prays her thanks, "Thank you, Jesus for being with me last week when I was in the hospital. Thank you for helping me and taking care of me."

The prayer stick is passed around the entire circle as people offer their thanks to the Creator. We have offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

My 17-year-old daughter, Shelby

opens her Bible and begins to read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 as we all listen to the familiar words that have been passed on to us by the apostle Paul, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

When she finishes, we pass first the bannock and then the grape juice, serving one another as we say, "Hilda, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you." The Lord's Supper has been shared in his body.

Our time at the table is concluded with passing the prayer stick around one more time as we lift up our prayers for others and ourselves before the Lord. We find healing and hope at the table, and now come in prayer to ask for it for specific situations in our lives and in our world. We finish by gathering around Hilda (for example) and putting our hands on her head and shoulders, anointing her forehead with oil as we pray for her failing health. We commit her to the healing power of the Holy Spirit.

Coming from a Reformed tradition, we believe that the Lord's Supper and baptism are sacraments, visible signs of God's grace. That is what I experience in sharing the

bannock and juice with my house church family: God's grace in our lives as we seek to follow Jesus in a community that is in much pain; God's grace which feeds us and gives us hope when so many around us are in despair. If I see healing in the lives around the circle, it is not due to my efforts, but God's grace at work in each of them. How fitting then, that we should share this visible sign together to give thanks, remember and look forward.

We know and trust that Christ's presence is with us whenever we gather to worship, and especially when we break bread and share the cup together. Nothing else makes it a sacrament, a visible sign of God's grace. It is the presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, not the presence of a specific person. Take and eat. Take and drink, all of you, and remember him. He is with you as you do. ■

Rev. Shannon Bell is part of the ministry team at Cariboo House Church Mission in B.C., along with Revs. David Webber and Jon Wyminga, her husband.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Equipping For...' website. At the top, it says 'EQUIPPING FOR...' followed by a logo for 'THE VINE' (Canadian Ministries/The Vine). Below this, there are several featured articles and resource categories. The main featured article is 'Welcome to the CrossWalk: A Holy Week Spiritual Journey' by Shannon Bell, dated January 12, 2011. Other featured articles include 'Breaking Through the Bible Wall' by Shannon Bell, dated January 25, 2011, and 'Conspire by Candlelight' by Shannon Bell, dated January 18, 2011. At the bottom, there are five resource categories: 'Resources for congregational development', 'Resources for christian education', 'Resources for evangelism & outreach', 'Resources for elders', and 'Resources for worship'.

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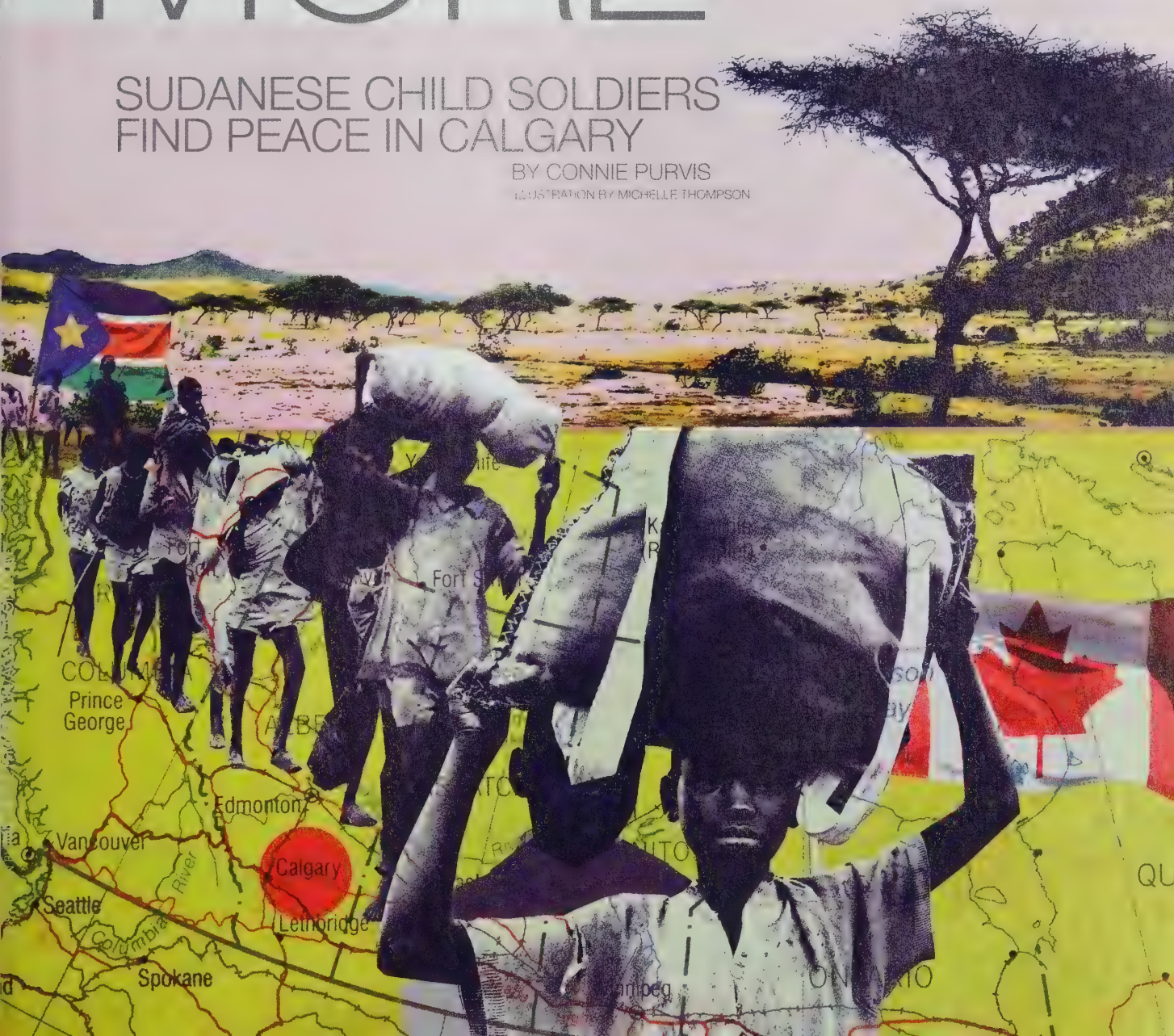


LOST NO MORE

SUDANESE CHILD SOLDIERS
FIND PEACE IN CALGARY

BY CONNIE PURVIS

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE THOMPSON



DENG LEUTH, 30, IS FINISHING HIS SECOND YEAR IN CELLUAR AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AT MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY.

He's charming, with crooked teeth in a wide smile, evidence that the child who once loved to do nothing but "drink milk and play" has not left him. But at age eight, that child became a "lost boy," one of more than 20,000 children, mostly boys, who fled their homes and were separated from their families when civil war consumed their country.



LEUTH WAS BORN TO a large family in the upper Nile region of southern Sudan. His father was a businessman, a cattle owner and the husband of four wives. When Leuth was seven, war broke out in Bor, the capital of Jonglei state; his family moved to safer ground, settling permanently in a village where they used to spend only part of each year. The war followed them.

One afternoon, Leuth took his family's goats out to graze and joined a game with other children. "While we were playing, we heard a sound such as one that you would hear when it is about to rain—thunder—and we ignored it, thinking maybe it was going to be raining," he said. The sound gradually turned into gunfire. When he turned to run back to the village, Leuth saw uniformed soldiers and ran for the bush instead. He climbed a tree and stayed there for two days, listening to sudden bursts of gunfire in the distance.

Twenty-two years later, Leuth is sitting across from me in the home of a Presbyterian elder in Calgary. Only two days after arriving at the Calgary immigration centre in 2004, he wrote to his friends to say that he was in "the best place for human coexistence." He hasn't changed his opinion since that day. Still, he admits that life in Canada was not easy at first "especially if you don't have any skills."

It has been a strange, long and disturbing journey for Leuth. His story mirrors that of his birth country. And Grace Presbyterian, Calgary, plays a small part as a place of restoration and solace for both of these grand narratives.

ON A WARM AFTERNOON last August, in the sweltering confines of the church hall, more than 300 south Sudanese gathered with only a day's notice. They were dressed in their finest, thrilled to greet members of a delegation from their homeland; the representatives had been visiting Quebec, learning about the 1995 referendum process that almost saw the francophone province secede from Canada. When the travellers heard about the large south Sudanese community in Calgary, they decided on a last-minute visit. And they brought good news: south Sudanese in Canada would be able to participate in an historic referendum to determine the future of Sudan. A deafening cheer filled the building.

"You should have heard them," said Bonnie Noyce Faust, an elder at Grace Presbyterian who has become like a grandmother to the lost boys and girls. "You probably did hear them. I think all of Canada must have heard them."

This January, southerners—including those scattered across the globe as refugees—decided whether to keep Africa's largest country unified or split into two nations. In addition to Sudan, voting stations operated in eight countries. In Canada, they were set up in Calgary and Toronto.

Sudan has been torn by civil war since before it became an independent nation. The north, which is arid and populated mostly by Arab Muslims, is very different from the lush south, which is inhabited by black Christians and animists. In 1955, the year before it shrugged off Anglo/Egyptian rule, the north and south clashed in what became a 17-year war. A 1972 peace agreement, which provided semi-autonomous rule for the south, offered a decade-long reprieve. But after then-president Gaafar Mohamed El-Nimeiri introduced nationwide Shariah law in 1983, a rebellion coalesced under the leadership of John Garang and the Southern People's Liberation Army was born. The second Sudanese civil war raged between SPLA and government forces until the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement in January 2005. It left more than two million dead and displaced countless others.

Calgary is home to about 10,000 Sudanese, many who fled their homes as children during the second war. Stories of burning villages and uniformed soldiers are commonplace, as are tales of long journeys from ruined homes to the nominal shelter of refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya. Many of the fleeing children banded together, forming large groups that learned to lick moisture from the grass in the morning and sleep in circles to avoid lions at night. Some joined the SPLA as child soldiers, carrying AK-47s taller than they were. They were dubbed the lost boys and girls of Sudan.

WHEN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD DENG Leuth ventured from his tree, he had difficulty finding what used to be his home. The landscape had changed; houses and crops were burned, and on footpaths he stumbled across bodies that sent him fleeing back to the trees. Eventually ➤

he joined a group of fellow survivors. On the advice of SPLA soldiers, they set out for Ethiopia, a journey that took more than a month by foot.

"We lived in a refugee camp for three years," he said. "Then in Ethiopia another war was being fought by the Ethiopians themselves, and that war forced us back into Sudan in 1991. And back in Sudan it was the same thing again, and we moved basically from one place to another. The government of Sudan was always after us. They would send helicopters and foot soldiers to try to find us, so we were always running and hiding. And eventually I became a soldier myself. Since August 1992 to, I think, September of 1993 I was in the army. Then eventually I left it and went to Kenya. I was 13.

"In Kenya, I almost thought of going back to Sudan because it was better and safer. The aboriginals who were around the refugee camp became the enemy of the refugees. Even during the day or night, they would come to the camp and kill people. So we decided to make fences around our own houses. It was like being in prison waiting to die.

IT WAS LIKE BEING IN PRISON WAITING TO DIE

It wasn't a good feeling. I lost some of my friends, people I played with, just through that. And at some point I felt, just like many others, that the best thing was to go back to Sudan. Then you would have your AK-47. It would be just who pulls the trigger first when someone comes to look for you. But then I decided that making that choice may not give me the long-term desires that I needed. So I thought about finding my way out of Kenya to a place somewhere like Canada. If I went back to Sudan, I thought, I would not get that opportunity. So I left Kakuma, which was the refugee camp where I was, to go to another refugee camp called Dadaab, which is in Kenya, too."

From Dadaab, a camp of predominantly Muslim Somalis who fled fighting in their own country, Leuth and some of the other lost boys and girls were accepted as refugees to Canada. He arrived on Sept. 14, 2004—16 years after he first fled his home.

For lost boys who had, in most cases, spent more than a decade in refugee camps, a western education was a dream they refused to abandon easily. With only part-time, minimum wage jobs, they were dogged by financial difficulties, and many struggled to pay back the government

loans they incurred as refugees. Leuth was on the verge of dropping out of school when Grace Presbyterian lived up to its name.

"Grace discovered us and they actually paid that money. It is what is keeping me in school today. That is something that I cannot describe in words. It is something you cannot find anywhere. I have not travelled Europe or other parts of North America, but I do think—because I have friends all around and have heard stories—never anywhere would you find anything like what Grace has done for us."

The relationship between the lost boys and Grace began not in church, but in a classroom. A young man approached his sociology professor, Mark Durieux, at the end of a lecture one day. He was James Nguen, a lost boy who had begun forming an association for lost boys and girls who lived in Calgary. Could Grace help them? Thanks to Durieux's prompting, three of the lost boys would come to session and tell their stories; by the time they finished the elders would be in tears.

"None of us, I don't think anybody, had heard these stories," said Rev. Victor Kim, minister at Grace. "We couldn't believe what we were hearing. The level of human suffering and evil that caused this, what they endured, what they'd overcome and the story of compassion; how, if nobody teaches you that you should hate someone because of your differences, you really won't. If nobody tells you, you're Nuer and he's Dinka and you're historic enemies, and if the two of you

are six years old and you're running through the desert, or through the forest with a lion on your tail, it doesn't matter which one's which. You'll carry that other person and that other person will carry you. These young kids were learning to care for each other. They have become a group defined by compassion.

"Our session and our church rallied around that and said, we want to be part of the story. This is the church's mission."

Members pitched in to create a fund that the association could use to pay off the loans the refugees had incurred for medical checks and plane tickets; the recipients in turn began to pay the money back in modest installments so it can be lent out again or, in the future, put to another purpose.

"This is their money," stressed Durieux, who helped create the interest-free loans as convener of the mission committee. Although Grace administers the fund at the association's request, it is the lost boys and girls who determine when and where it's distributed.

The church has also introduced the group to a community health program, run in partnership with Grace, that connects them with nurses-in-training from the University of Calgary.

"It's so ironic that they would have endured what they did, and then end up dying here in Canada needlessly," said Durieux. "In the past two months, two people have passed away, and it looks like they had illnesses that could have been dealt with early on. But they didn't know how to access the healthcare system."

Things like oral hygiene, nutrition, and how and when to go to a doctor are not common knowledge; they must be learned. And learning has been something the Sudanese are willing—even desperate—to do. Now, with university educations and a drive to see their home country develop and succeed, they "not only represent the future of southern Sudan in terms of repatriating skills, they are the vanguard of leadership," Durieux observed.

Some of the association's members are well respected by the southern government in Juba. Dhieu Dok Minyang, president of the Calgary Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan Association, spearheaded the spontaneous event that brought visiting south Sudanese delegates to Grace, on only a day's notice.

"I thought I was doing something small, but at the end of the day, it was huge," he said.

"In this case, acting locally is acting globally," said Victor Kim. "There are opportunities to make a difference in the world by investing in the people that God sends our way. And we may never know what kind of an influence or impact we're having through the ripple effect."

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF the city, through the blowing snow, south Sudanese flooded to the voting centre on January 9. The referendum was expected to yield a landslide in favour of secession for the south. As he waited in line, one man pumped his fist in the air and sang a chorus from a south Sudanese anthem.

"It means we will fight, we will fight until we are free," translated James Mathiang, a lost boy whose forehead is marked by ritual scarring. It means he is a man among the Nuer people, able to accept the pain of a blade on his forehead without crying or flinching. He was only seven when he fled his home. He became a man when he was very young.

Of the tens of thousands of south Sudanese living in Canada, less than 2,300 voted in the referendum. Widespread

mistrust and a suspicion of any information perceived to come from Khartoum kept many from the registration tables. Although the International Organization for Migration, a third party tasked with running the referendum, did its best to allay fears and address misinformation, many worried their registrations would be used against them by the Khartoum government. Others were deterred by distance or erratic weather, although the Calgary centre drew voters from as far as Maryland and P.E.I.

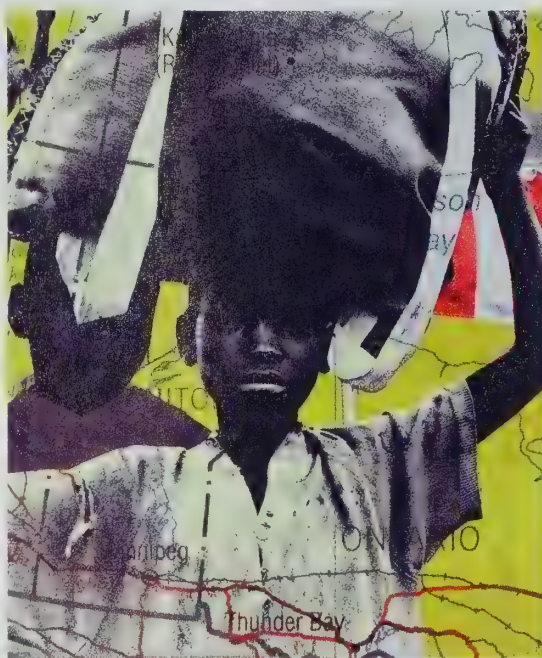
Overall, the referendum process has been lauded by the international community. Although the future of Sudan's fertile and oil-producing Abyei region, which lies between the north and south, remains in dispute, the result of the referendum is clear: with an almost unanimous voice, the south called for secession.

Still, violence and mistrust persist. Almost one month to the day since Mathiang cast his ballot in Calgary, his hometown in Jonglei state was attacked by troops loyal to George Athor, a high-ranking officer who rebelled against the SPLA last April. According to officials, the clash killed between 100 and 200, most of them civilians. Mathiang's parents weren't in town that day, but some of his relatives were found among the dead. The southern government has accused the north of arming Athor's soldiers; Khartoum denies it. And the sporadic local violence makes life uneasy.

For Leuth, who was among the 99 per cent who voted for secession, the referendum

itself was a way for all south Sudanese to begin to heal.

"Most of the time I live as though I'm pretending," he admitted. "Everything is so good here; I have food to eat, I have water to drink, I go to school. But the people I was born with are not having the same things. And whenever I think about them, everything I have here becomes meaningless. When they have the same peace, everything I have here would be very meaningful to me. If South Sudan is a country, and if an end will come to the conflict and everything that has happened since, then their peace would be my peace." ■



Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.



AIDS and Gender Stereotypes

TRAINING MEN TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.

BY SUSAN JAMES

“It dawned on us that by working with only women, we weren’t having much of an impact on HIV and AIDS. It wasn’t working if we didn’t include men too,” said Tiffani Wright, a Mennonite working in Tanzania.

Last December, 26 staff trainers from four African countries gathered in Tanzania for a workshop on gender and human rights in HIV and AIDS

education. They were tackling an important challenge: how to get men (in every situation—home, church and work) to take their role seriously in preventing and caring for those affected by AIDS. As participant, Ruth Munyao from Kenya said, “As women, we are excited to see if men can and will be involved in prevention, treatment and care in HIV and AIDS.”

It was my privilege to represent the Canadian churches supporting the

workshop, along with trainers from partner organizations of eight Canadian church denominations. There were trainers from 18 organizations in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and South Africa.

Facilitators wove participants’ personal experiences in human rights, gender and HIV and AIDS together with the required facts and skills. Participants were challenged to consider their own and their ►

HIV in Four of the Participating Countries

	Population living with HIV in 2009	% of the population living with HIV	Adults aged 15-49 living with HIV/AIDS
South Africa	5,600,000	4%	7%
Kenya	1,500,000	6%	12%
Tanzania	1,400,000	3%	6%
Malawi	920,000	11%	18%
Canada	44,000	0.2%	0.4%

Sources: World Health Organization and The World Factbook

community's gender stereotyping. One man talked about being pressured by boys to harass girls; one woman talked about suddenly being excluded from playing sports with boys.

Participants learned how to grab their communities' attention through stories, drama and roleplaying. For me, the most compelling roleplaying scenario was of a Malawian woman who had just lost her husband. According to local tradition, her husband's brother would inherit her, her children and property. If he has AIDS, she will contract it as well.

Once the woman and her pastor learned of her human rights, they were able to convince the family that she has the right and freedom to make her own decisions and choices. Even though workshop participants were only "playing the role," a transforma-

tion in attitudes clearly swept across the group, showing what a difference simply knowing one's rights can make.

*As woman
we are excited
to see if men can
and will be involved
in prevention,
treatment and care
in HIV and AIDS'*

Since this workshop, it's been amazing to follow up with participants on how they are progressing. David Mburu, one of our Presby-

terian World Service and Development participants, has been training pastors throughout Kenya, who in turn train other community volunteers. These volunteers help their local communities understand HIV and AIDS, learn what they can do to prevent it and to reduce discrimination. He told us that the training was "very helpful not only to me as a person but will also go a long way in strengthening our training program," especially in the area of gender. Following the workshop, Ruth Munyao from Kenya laid out her plans from January 2011 to 2015, starting with her region's bishop. Thoko Nkomo from South Africa has already spearheaded top-level meetings in her organization and added, "We are praying about it because the challenge is huge."

For me, the real work and reward is ahead; all of us have been working on this issue, making some difference in tackling AIDS and reducing death rates. Now we believe that by reaching men (like the bishop in Kenya or the husband at home), we can make a bigger difference in overcoming AIDS. ■

Susan James is the Africa program coordinator for Presbyterian World Service and Development

Campaigning Together

Like the Presbyterian Church in Canada with its Towards a World Without AIDS campaign, other churches have also campaigned to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS. In 2007, an ecumenical group, Canadian Churches in Action, saw a real need for training in gender and human rights for HIV and AIDS, based on what our African partners were telling us. Our church agencies had been individually supporting

HIV and AIDS programs, including prevention, palliative care, orphan support, education and joining the fight against stigma and discrimination.

In partnership with Southern African AIDS Trust, along with Presbyterian World Service and Development, Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, Canadian Baptist Ministries and the United Church of Canada, we pooled our resources. Together we helped create

learning materials and training that make connections between human rights and preventing AIDS, and we are regularly communicating among the participants about their new training. We tested the materials in South Africa and Kenya, and these materials and training are now rolling out to reach communities in four countries, helping us continue to strive towards a world without AIDS. ■

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From the Moderator

Change is Coming

GOD'S PLANS ARE UNFOLDING. BY HERB GALE

There is a joke I have told from time to time that I am sure most us have heard before. Question: How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb? Answer: Change! Who said anything about change?! We laugh because there is an element of truth in the caricature. Change does come slowly in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, if at all. At times the polity we have developed to ensure that it is the mind of Christ we are listening to and not someone's pet idea or the latest fad seems to be a roadblock rather than becoming the avenue for necessary, creative change.

But at the heart of what it means to be Presbyterian is a continued impulse for genuine change coupled with the good news that we can change through God's transforming grace. We are "reformed and always reforming." There is no doctrine of infallibility in our statements of faith, just the recognition that we are all sinners in need of God's saving grace.

In our 2011 PWS&D Lenten liturgies written by Rev. Karen Horst, the recurring refrain at the beginning of each week's liturgy is, "Change is coming; for God's plans are unfolding." Horst's words echo the words Kennon Callahan often repeats, that the Presbyterian Church is not so much an institution that we need to prop up and support as it is a living and dynamic movement that we are invited to become a part of. We trace our roots back to the renewal movement under John Calvin's leadership in Geneva. That movement

was an attempt to reform the church according to biblical principles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was a bold attempt, not just to reform the church, but to build a more just and humane society. John Knox, who fled Scotland because of religious persecution, settled in Geneva and

AT THE HEART OF
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witnessed the changes taking place. He marveled that he had never seen a more Christian society on earth, and took much of what he learned to launch his movement in Scotland.

Change is coming; for God's plans are unfolding...

As I travel across the church I see a new and refreshing openness to experiment with different ways of being the church. I am convinced this is the work of the Spirit moving among us. At St. Andrew's, Sutton, Ont., I witnessed a small congregation's bold ministry to reach out to their community through their Tuesday evening community suppers (see the *Record's* February issue for their story). Now they are exploring ways to organize their life together to ensure that mission continues. They are truly open to wherever the Spirit may lead.

Change is coming; for God's plan is unfolding...

While in Edmonton, I preached at Parkland First in Spruce Grove. This new church community worships in a public building—appropriately dubbed the Pioneer Centre—but they will soon move to an abandoned warehouse they purchased with the help of a grant from Canada Ministries. They hope to hold their first worship service there in time for Easter. Their worship is truly Presbyterian, but not in the traditional sense. Worshippers gather around tables with coffee in hand. There are no worship bulletins; everything is projected. The children's story the day I was there was a passage from the Sermon on the Mount. The children had drawn pictures to illustrate the story that Rev. Mark Chiang turned into a video, captivating both children and adults.

Change is coming; for God's plans are unfolding...

May the recurring refrain repeated in our Lenten liturgies become the recurring refrain for the Presbyterian Church as we follow him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life! ■ Blessings,



Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving for the PCC. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca



Knox, Georgetown, Ont.

"Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens."—Psalm 150:1

Herb Ciceri, left, the accomplished organist of Knox, invited friend Ray Kingsmore on the drums and percussion, and special guest Charlie Finlay on the saxophone and flute, to a special music event. They played everything from Bach and Beethoven, to Ray Charles and the Beatles. Along with a Hammond organ, acoustic and electric piano, Ciceri made the Knox pipe organ sound like it had rarely, if ever, done in the past—a tribute both to the player and the quality of the 1964 organ built by Keates Organ Company in Acton, Ont.

The best part of this story: the musicians will consider doing this again for a fundraiser. Contact herb-ciceri@rogers.com.
Online feature: more pics of the boys at play.

St. Andrew's, Brandon, Man.

Cake of the month: St. Andrew's celebrated its centennial in classic Presbyterian fashion: cake and guest preacher Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris, seen here (left) with Rev. Paul Sakasov and music director, David Wilson.
Online feature: Farris in the pulpit!



Elmvale, Ont.

More cake of the month: Elmvale went through a year of events leading up to their 150th anniversary last November. In classic Presbyterian form, they too had a party and called on Rev. Glenn Cooper, whose parents, John and Helen, had ministered at Elmvale through the 1950s. This group hug was taken just before the congregation gathered for a luncheon, a fellowship they do very well.



Mt. Zion, Ridgetown, Ont.

Follow the ball carefully here: New To You is a consignment store, associated with Mt. Zion for 20 years. That would be Mission #1. Volunteers associated with the store voted to give \$10,000 towards the soon to be completed Chatham-Kent Health Team Clinic. That would be Mission #2, born out of #1. Pretty amazing how this faith/grace stuff works. Seen here: Kim Thompson and Jane Dempster (co-managers) present the cheque to Ken Richmond and Charlie Mitton, members of the Howard Mutual Foundation Board.



Norval, Ont.

Mid-September was busy for Norval. A new sign was dedicated in the name of tireless congregational worker Jamie Cunningham. He is seen here with his wife, Marlene, who donated the funds for the sign. Jamie has served on the board and the session and has been clerk, and that doesn't begin to list his services to the church. The week before the sign was dedicated, Norval welcomed its new minister. That story and photo are online.

online extra

ON OUR WEBSITE: Including the extras noted on these pages, two great stories from the east coast: Welcome to the church, Nathan Matthew! And, welcome to Boularderie, Peter MacDonald.



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Obituaries



Darling (Phillips), Gertrude, passed away peacefully at Cambridge Memorial Hospital on Saturday, December 18, 2010 at age 93. Predeceased by

her loving husbands Frederick Phillips and George William Darling and by her brother, Reginald Canham. Beloved mother of David Phillips and his wife, Anne of Uxbridge, Ont.; stepmother of Steven Darling and his wife, Marie of Cambridge, Ont., and Linda and her husband, Victor Demecha of Calgary, Alta.; dearly loved grandmother of Nancy, Michelle, Kimberly, Melissa and Alexis; great-grandmother of Rachel, Nathan, Richelle, Jordy and Hannah.

Gertie was a longtime member of St. Andrew's Galt Presbyterian Church and volunteered for over 25 years at Cambridge Memorial Hospital Auxillary, CGIT and Sunday school.

Gilbert, Sondra, passed away on October 17, 2010 at Lake of the Woods District Hospital at the age of 73. There was a memorial service on Friday, October 22, 2010 at First Presbyterian Church, Kenora, Ont. She is survived by her husband, Jim of 56 years; children Suzanne (Doug) McIntosh and Lesley (Chris) Ratchford; grandchildren Daniel, Erin and Jennifer McIntosh, Jordan and Emily Poschner.

Sondra was born in Brantford, Ont., on February 6, 1937 and moved to

Kenora with Jim in 1960. Sondra was a warm and deeply caring person. Second only to the love of her life, Jim, were her grandchildren. She delighted in their individual personalities, always making them feel special and making sure they could spell correctly! One of her favourite times was when all the families were together for 'galas': dinner, games, singing and lots of laughter. The Rabbit Lake Olympics were a particular favourite of hers.

Music played a very important role in Sondra's life starting in her youth in Brantford. There she won awards for her singing, sang in her school Glee Club and in Central Presbyterian Church choir which is where she met Jim. When she and Jim moved to Kenora she immediately became involved in music in the community. She was a longtime member of the G-Clef choir and a well known soloist in town. Most important to her was her service to the church through music. She devoted over a decade to directing a highly respected junior choir. She also sang in the church's senior choir for close to 50 years.

When Sondra retired from her job as librarian for the Board of Education she enjoyed dabbling in many different crafts, particularly quilting. Here she spent countless hours learning and laughing with her "quilting buddies." Her laughter and singing will be greatly missed by all who knew her.



Penny, Rev. William Dryden, passed away in Toronto on Tuesday, January 4, 2011. Left behind are wife, Ruth; sons, William, Cary and John-Philip; daughters, Lee-Ann, Christy and

Sarah; and their families. Bill was the beloved son of Evelyn Penny of Owen Sound, Ont., and the late Dr. Stuart Penny.

Bill graduated from Knox College in 1974 and served in Grande Prairie, Alta., and Westville, N.S., before falling ill in 1981. ■

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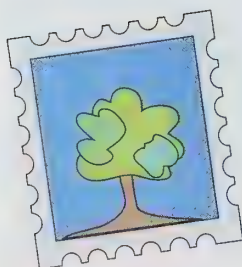
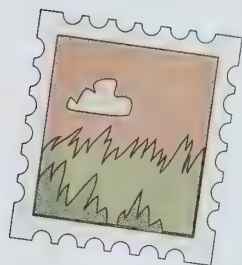
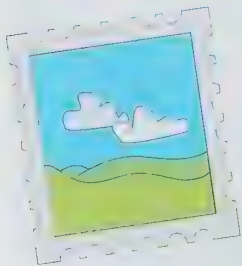
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OUR LETTER TO
BELIEVERS AT A DISTANCE

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This letter comes to you from Jennifer and Erin, united in faith through Jesus Christ. We are on assignment at the [Presbyterian Record](#) to share the Bible message and to reply to your questions and comments.

We include in our greeting all those who call out to Jesus, wherever they live—for you are God’s chosen generation—each day within the reach of God’s grace and love. Together may we grow in knowledge and understanding of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We thank you for your recent letters to us and we look forward to May 2011 when we will begin an online exchange at the website of the [Presbyterian Record](http://presbyterianrecord.ca) (presbyterianrecord.ca). Now that Called to Wonder is 10 years old, it is old enough to go online!

When you are finished reading this letter, read it to others at your house and when you go out, share the message with your friends and neighbours. We know that God not only loves you but also has selected you for a special purpose. May God, our loving parent, Jesus, our constant friend, and the blessed power of the Holy Spirit guide our steps to you.

Goodbye for now, friends. To all of God's precious followers, may grace and love be yours.

In Christ,
Jennifer and Erin

All great men and women, even some merely good ones, have always inspired their communities to live differently, to live with distinction

For the Journey, continued from page 50

Beef Trail Creek drainage. Beef Trail Creek was the centre of some important aboriginal trap lines. Logging it would severely endanger the trap lines and subsequently the livelihoods of several families.

Before Christ launched us in mission work, I had been a forest technology instructor at a community college. We hadn't been in the Cariboo Chilcotin very long when I was contacted by the Cariboo Chilcotin Tribal Council to see if I would consider helping out with some teaching as part of my mission work. We had prayed about it and felt led to do so. And so once a month, for about a week at a time, I would drive the mostly gravel road for four and a half hours out to Anahim Lake to teach forestry to a group of young men and women on the Ulkatcho Reserve.

Thus began our mission relationship with the Southern Carrier or Dakelh people that eventually spread to the Kluskus and Nazko First Nations and continues on today. I was deeply impressed with this first encounter, and what impressed me the most was the way this group of young people looked up to Chief Jimmy Stillas. He had begun like any one of them. He had struggled with life, even with alcoholism, and yet he had risen from the ashes like a phoenix to sit at the negotiating table as an equal with the leaders of the province. He was always driven by a genuine concern for his people and not just for himself. I don't think I met a single young person at the time that did not aspire to emulate him, to live differently. And neither did I meet a single tribal elder who did not respect him. It seems to me, given the reality of the fractious tribal life and politics at the time, this ability to inspire his whole community bordered on the miraculous. Chief Stillas was a genuine inspiration to his people, and continued to be so even long after his death.

All great men and women, even

some merely good ones, have always inspired their communities to live differently, to live with distinction, to live peculiar lives. As rare as they are, most of us can make a list of such people, some we have known personally and some by reputation only. Jimmy Stillas is on my list. But what about Jesus? Is he on anyone's list?

Perhaps it's a stupid question, but I find myself asking it this Easter. In fact, I have pondered this question from time to time ever since I became a disciple of Jesus some 30 years ago. The reason this question keeps coming up is, at least for me, as I look at the life of Jesus and as I look at the life of the community that bears his name, I am challenged to find many similarities beyond the congregation at the institutional level. This seems to be particularly true at Easter when the focus is on Jesus who gives his life for the world, and I share life in an institutional community that bears his name and that seems to me to be increasingly concerned with taking its life from the world or at the very least dogged with a concern for its survival in the world. It begs the question—Did Jesus inspire his community with his life and in his death or not?

"Then (Jesus) said to them all: 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'" (Luke 9:23) I have always heard these words individually and struggled to figure out how to live them personally. But the scripture makes it clear that Jesus spoke these words "to them all" ... to his community. For me it's a relatively new experience to begin to hear these words of Jesus as a community not just as an individual—to interpret and live them "in community."

As I do this, I am helped from within the Christian community as these words of Jesus are echoed in

the teachings of some contemporary prophets like Tullio Vinay (founder of the Agape Community in the Waldensian Church): "The Church's task or mission is not to save itself ... Christ has already done that. It is rather to give itself in love and service ... in fact to die for the world." From within the Christian community these words of Jesus resonate in the teachings of some contemporary mystics like Thomas Merton: "The last thing in the world that should concern a Christian or a church is survival in a temporal and worldly sense: to be concerned with this is implicit denial of the Victory of Christ and of the Resurrection."

These are amazing words for a community and institution to live by, to be inspired by, to shape its life by. But words are not enough. If a community and institution is going to live differently, to live with distinction, to live a peculiar life, it has to take its inspiration from an actual life lived, an actual life given. For me, that's the challenge this Easter. What I think this means for those of us who share the community of Jesus in the institution of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is that we need to rip the cross off of the wall of the institution where we have it comfortably stored, and plant it right on the back of our institution and refuse to do anything that does not reflect the life and death of Jesus for the world. A community that gives its life for the world, that's what I am looking to discover in our sessions, presbyteries, synods, and assemblies from now on. ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



Inspiring a Community

CHIEF JIMMY STILLAS WAS A LEADER, EVEN IN DEATH. BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

IT WAS LATE in the day in October 1990. We were traveling south on the Cariboo Highway, heading home from Williams Lake. CBC Radio was playing in the background. I wasn't listening. I was driving in my usual zombie state with my mind impaled on the horns of my overactive imagination. And then something straight-armed my attention. It sounded like the words, "Jimmy Stillas."

I jerked back to consciousness and fumbled for the radio. Jimmy Stillas was dead. Linda and I sat and listened in complete shock as the story starkly unfolded. By the time we had reached home, shock had turned into dismay.

Jimmy Stillas (1936-1990) was highly regarded as the Chief of the Ulkatcho First Nation in the hinterland of the West Chilcotin. In October 1990, while out hunting on his grandfather's trap line, his snow machine went through the

ice. It took his hunting partner two days to walk out for help. In the end, Stillas died a tragic death. The RCMP's alleged delay in initiating a search when Chief Stillas was reported missing was one of the incidents that triggered British Columbia to hold the Cariboo-Chilcotin Justice Inquiry; it reported in 1993 and made extensive recommendations around reforming policing and police/aboriginal relationships in the area.

But this is only the news story. The people's story is much more profound. Chief Jimmy Stillas touched our lives only obliquely and yet he had a profound effect. When we first arrived in the Cariboo Chilcotin in 1989 to engage in rural mission work, the Ulkatcho nation, which was about four hours west of the closest urban centre of Williams Lake, was engaged in a standoff with the province over the logging of the

continued on page 49



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A woman with reddish-brown hair is leaning over two young children, a girl and a boy, who are sitting on a couch. They are all looking at a large magazine or book that the woman is holding. The girl, on the left, has light brown hair with a small blue bow. The boy, on the right, has light brown hair and is wearing a plaid shirt. The magazine they are reading has a dark cover with the title 'Record' and a subtitle 'Malawi'. The background is slightly blurred, showing a dark-colored couch.

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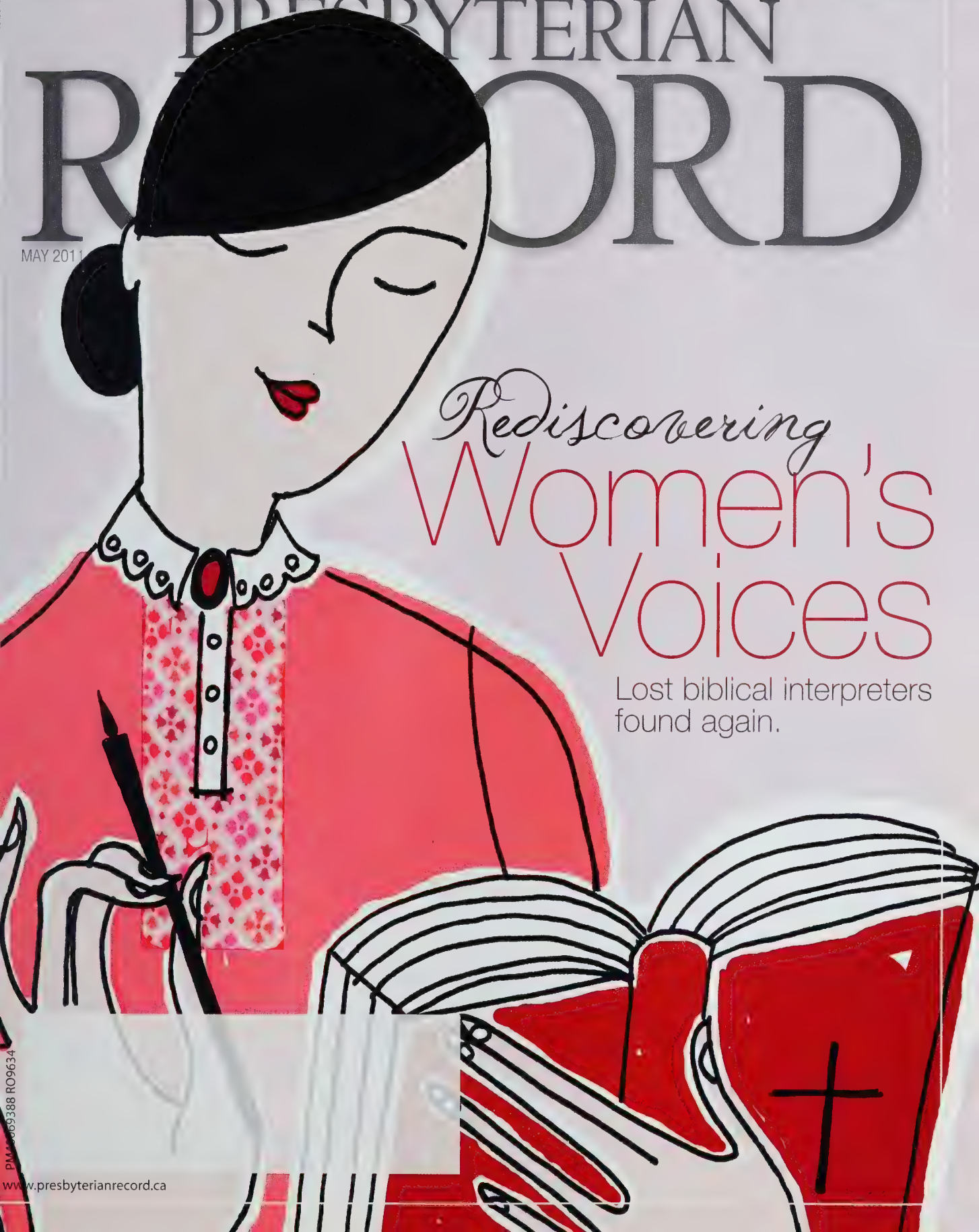
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**PREACHING THE GOSPEL AND
RELATING TO THE CULTURE**

It's All About Relationships

THE CHURCH NEEDS TO HEAR MORE WOMEN'S VOICES. BY DAVID HARRIS

One of my favourite newspaper cartoons was about a Nova Scotia judge who had been making sexist comments to female lawyers and clients based on a fundamentalist reading of the Bible. It featured a little cherub bonking the judge with his gavel on the noggin and whispering in his ear: "It's God ... she wants a word with you."

Despite the fact that God is beyond the distinction of gender, a view of God as male has dominated all forms of Christianity. Slowly, however, that is being challenged by contemporary women theologians and the rediscovery of past female theologians.

Our cover story this issue focuses on 19th-century theologians. Their influence was considerable, despite the fact their names have been largely forgotten.

But this also raises the larger question of why women are still in the minority in church and religious academic leadership. In fact, despite their equality under the law, women are still under-represented in most spheres of our society.

Afghanistan has a higher percentage of female politicians than Canada, for heaven's sake, and that's in a country where the Taliban still wield tremendous power.

And while the Taliban are extreme, their fear regarding women is really what motivates most gender politics in most cultures. Because educated women who can control reproduction spell the end to patriarchy.

The church says women are equal to men in every way. Unfortunately, the record indicates there is still a long way to go.

Female elders are still outnumbered by males; some presbyteries barely have any women. Female ministers of child-



The church says women are equal to men in every way. Unfortunately, the record indicates there is still a long way to go

bearing age say they are often asked questions about their intentions regarding pregnancy.

Not only is this unethical, it also violates human rights legislation, but complaints are nonexistent out of fear of being blackballed.

And the halls of the academy are still dominated by male theologians. In fact, so prejudiced are we, that we call the work of female theologians feminist theology. As if male authored theology should be seen as normative.

What we should perhaps do is refer to masculinist theology. It might be instructive.

Perhaps it is a product of environmental psychology, but I find women in general and women theologians (the few I am familiar with) are far more focused on relationship than men.

Certainly this makes sense from the perspective that they are the ones who bear children. Until recently and still only in the developed world, this was and is exceedingly dangerous. A visit to any gravesite shows how many women

died in childbirth.

And, given that it was only the generation before me that had access to birth control, these facts meant women's lives were almost entirely focused on their family, hence the concern with relationships.

As a final result, this also kept most women from becoming scholars, and so this perspective has been lacking in theological discussion.

Male theology has instead focused on definitions and rules, on laws and hierarchies. It has concentrated on the head, not the heart.

Not only has this produced unbalanced theology and fuelled the divisions in the faith over the most arcane differences, it is profoundly at odds with the story of God's love for us humans (i.e. relationship) portrayed in scripture.

Love, after all, is not about rules, it's about relationship. And, somewhat ironically, when it comes to what we can say most clearly about the nature of God from a Christian perspective, relationship is what God is all about.

All that God has revealed to us about God's inner life is that it is about relationship: the doctrine of the Trinity is just that: Father, Son and their mutual Love we call Spirit.

In a time when anxieties about interpretation of scripture are regrettably but increasingly defined by a fundamentalism that disregards context and the overarching theme of scripture in favour of a narrow, tortured legalism, the church would do well to reassess what its purpose is: to reveal God's love for all people.

Let's have more women's voices please. ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.5, MAY 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

CONVENER **Michael Munnick**
board@presbyterianrecord.ca

ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

Carol McCormick

Phone: 905-833-6200, ext. 25

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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634

Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.

Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government
of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF)
for our publishing activities.

Subscription rates. GST/HST not included.

Every Home Plan: \$19.50

Individual: \$29.50

U.S.A. and foreign: \$39 **Single copies:** \$3.95

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Magazines
Canada

Stepping Up to the Plate

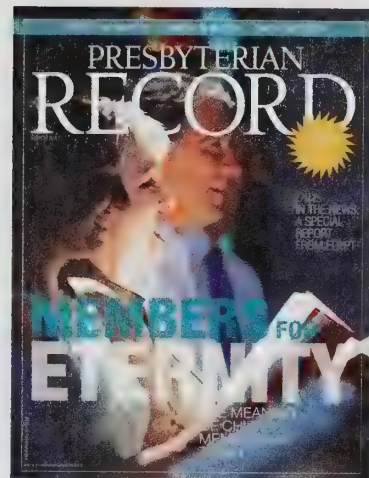
When the tsunami struck Indonesia, Presbyterian World Service and Development was all over it seeking donations. When the earthquake struck Haiti, PWS&D was all over it seeking donations. When the monsoon floods hit Pakistan, PWS&D was all over it seeking donations. New Zealand has been hit with two devastating earthquakes recently and PWS&D is nowhere, apparently. Why? Are our brothers and sisters in New Zealand no more deserving of our support than our brothers and sisters in Indonesia, Haiti and Pakistan? PWS&D needs to step up to the plate and give us some answers as to why they didn't immediately call for donations for New Zealand, as they did for the other three named places.

MICHAEL MILLAR, BARRIE, ONT.

Ken Kim, director of PWS&D, responds:

Thank you for your question. When there is a request for help or an international appeal for an emergency, PWS&D does all that it can to respond. PWS&D is a mechanism of the church to respond to emergencies, conflict and poverty. Churches, presbyteries and the PWS&D committee can also

Letters



write to us

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initiate an appeal for an emergency response. However, in the case of the New Zealand earthquake, the country did not seek international support in the aftermath of the disaster. PWS&D also did not receive any funds to respond to this disaster from the constituency.

All disasters are tragic, from local disasters in Canada to those experienced by countries like Haiti, Pakistan and New Zealand. The ►

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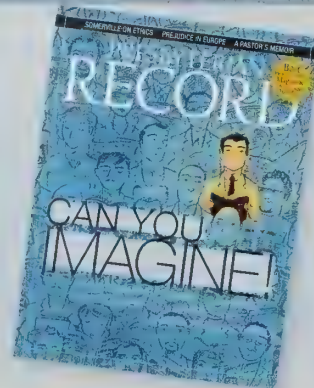
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Carol McCormick

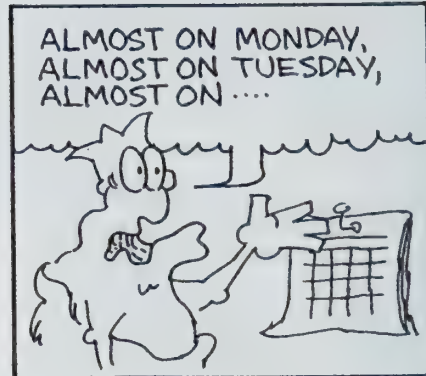
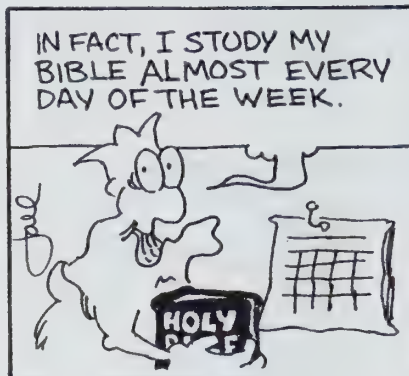
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fact that New Zealand is a highly developed country with good governance and resources to respond was evident. Countries such as Indonesia, Haiti and Pakistan are characterized by high levels of poverty, and national governments were unable to deal with the disasters adequately. Our local

partners in those countries requested international support following those emergencies, and we responded.

PWS&D can send financial support in response to an emergency situation almost anywhere in the world through the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together), including to New Zealand should designated donations be received. We do our very best with a small staff team based in Toronto to respond to many needs in this world with limited resources and funds, working with local partners who communicate their needs and priorities to us.

Churchianity

The grievous shriveling of our church's membership—50 per cent in the last 50 years—may have something to do with our widespread corruption of the gospel: "God so loved the world," into "God so loved the church." Churchianity is a disabling misrepresentation of Christianity.

One consequence of Canadian churches in the 21st century being nearly-silent in their prophetic role is the grotesque and deadly fact that, with all the blessings of life in Canada, we nevertheless join the rest of the have-nations in the diabolically perverse distortion of economic and governmental policy whereby the rich get richer and the middle class and the poor get poorer.

STUART COLES, TORONTO

Infallible Rules

Re Teen Leaves Church After Role in Pride Day Questioned, October 2010

I am disappointed and deeply concerned that we fail to determine life values and principles in light of scriptural doctrine. Why is there reference to the *Social Action Handbook*? Are we now allowing our culture to be the filter through which we determine right or wrong, rather than the Bible?

In the *Presbyterian Book of Forms*, section 444.1 clearly states: "the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being the word of God, are the only infallible rule of faith and manners." Without absolutes from scriptures, we have no moral compass. May we not be like Lot and his family (Genesis 19), accepting the lifestyle, attitudes, values and principles of the world we live in.

May God help us all to live victoriously, to bring honour and glory to His Holy Name.

GARY BROOKS, KING CITY, ONT.

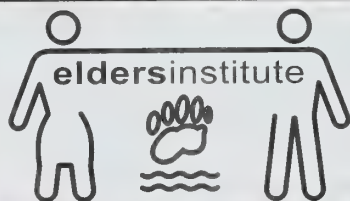
Seconding a Sentiment

Re Through Action and Prayers, March Letters

This is an interesting exchange and Bill Ashby, a member of the Life and Mission Agency committee and a representative elder to presbytery, makes a valid point; but I hope he won't mind if I (perhaps unfairly) use his response as a springboard.

We can all say "Amen" with Ashby when he says (my paraphrase) that we

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must all pull our weight and row the Presbyterian ship together. But Hans Kouwenberg is asking, "Where is the ship headed?"

Kouwenberg, for his part, is reaching out, thinking like an apostle or a missionary. He is asking, not how can we improve the state of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, but how can we share the good news of Jesus Christ with the next generation? He asks, in effect, have we listened to this generation enough to be able to speak to it?

Amen.

Kouwenberg points to the limited knowledge, limited availability and limited ability of the resource personnel in the Vine network to provide "tangible help," and calls for a national strategy and a realignment of resources.

Kouwenberg writes, "[L]et's share more gifted, skilled and experienced people who can embody some of the changes we need."

Amen.

Maybe I'm presbyopic; but I've seen a lot of talented people in the Presbyterian Church who could be, should be, sharing their gifts in implementing a national, denominational strategy for making our worship alive, vibrant and joyful, and for effectively sharing our faith. Is there a place in the Presbyterian system for them?

ANDREW DONALDSON

EXCERPTED FROM IN SONG, APRIL 1, ONLINE

Mother Comments

Re A Letter to the Person Under the Train, The Messy Table, April 4, Online

With my son now in the Canadian Forces and knowing that one of these days he will sign up to be deployed and how deployments change people ... he is hearing "mother comments." Mother comments are those pithy, short, important things to share with



Fundamentalists by Default, March issue

a son or daughter. Mother comments are, "Life is always worth living," "What God gave to you is precious," "You always have a choice," "There is never any problem too big that God cannot see you through," "You are precious," and, "There are many people who love and care for you."

LORNA, ONLINE

No Attendance Requirement

Re Members for Eternity, March

I did a little bit of research. It appears the requirement for attendance at communion to maintain membership was removed in 1986, and the requirement to record attendance was removed from the *Book of Forms* in 2003.

REG MCMILLAN, ONLINE

Section 125.5 of the Book of Forms states in part:

Members who have not been faithful in their attendance at worship services and have ceased to participate actively in the life and work of the congregation shall be contacted, visited where possible, and encouraged to renew their commitment to Christ and his church. Where possible, such persons should continue to receive pastoral care ■

online extra

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Rebuild Our Connections

THROUGH CHRIST. BY ANDREW FAIZ



This is the story of two presbyteries—though I think of many—and two surveys. Both presbyteries participated at the Emmaus Conference in April 2010 and both have undertaken follow-up events. Both had similar surveys done of their active members asking them what they thought of their own presbytery. Here are some of the not-so-shocking answers:

Presbytery A is not encouraging or supportive, does not challenge or assist ministers, is not visionary, does not shape new directions, is not proactive.

Presbytery B is stressed out, discouraged, frustrated, combative, draining, spinning wheels, filled with alliances, disconnected, business-like, indecisive, scared, disillusioned; but also changing and filled with possibilities.

Other issues facing Presbytery A include the court structures which discourage discussion, fellowship or strategizing, meaning they are unable to face realities of changing demographics and declining memberships, are not meeting needs of youth today, and have no effective relationships with congregations. This presbytery also lacks skilled mediators. They have few presbyters participating. The atmosphere is dismissive and adversarial. There is no fellowship or fun and lay representatives are unable to participate. Ouch! Worse than ouch.

Still, we're in the hope business and both presbyteries laid out their wish list. Presbytery B wished that by 2014 they would have unity in purpose and ministry, feel supported, feel connected, feel energized, be able to meet challenges, do some church

planting, have trust in each other and share resources.

Presbytery A made two lists, which I shall name Big Changes and Small Changes. Under small changes they suggested to themselves they should create mission statements and strategic priorities; abandon needless forms, eliminate reports with no

THEIR MEDITATIONS,
THEIR VULNERABILITY,
ARE POWERFUL AND
DRAMATIC

recommendations; have more round table discussion, more small groups; set time limits and keep them; share positive and encouraging news; organize important business to the top of the agenda; review financial implications before presentation.

For big changes they suggested to themselves: More prayer; more praise and worship; more fellowship; more retreats; more strategic planning; more small group discussions; fewer committee reports.

Well, not surprisingly, Presbytery B had a similar list: Focus on Christ;

a sense of holiness and spirituality; address difficult tasks in love; display love for each other.

Sitting through these two workshops—a couple of months apart—I was reminded of what Richard Topping wrote in our January issue: “I am just dying to one day say after a presbytery meeting, ‘Wow! Now that was inspiring.’ I’m not being cynical; I recognize the need to do business and that administrative work is crucial. But what if our business was framed by more intentional learning and spiritual support and imagination formation as it was in Geneva?”

Yes, what if indeed. Presbytery B imagined a change in its character from business-like to spiritual and loving. In so doing, they realized they could achieve some seemingly impossible tasks: grow, be fiscally responsible, be cutting edge, be intentional and creative.

These presbyteries have many challenges, their membership ranges from the conservative to the liberal, individual churches are struggling while a small handful are growing—in short, these two presbyteries are representative of the church.

And, yet, their meditations, their vulnerability, are powerful and dramatic. This leadership through honesty is scary stuff; and perhaps that's what sets them slightly apart from the rest of the church. But I am hopeful; I have heard of others going through a similar process; and I know there is power in love. Through Christ.

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor. ■

Horst Sole Candidate

BARRIE MINISTER IS 2011
MODERATOR NOMINEE.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

PRESBYTERY VOTES HAVE been tallied and Rev. Dr. Rick Horst will be presented as sole moderator nominee at this year's General Assembly. The moderator will be affirmed when the church's highest court convenes on June 5 in London, Ont.

"I consider this a remarkable privilege," said the minister of St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont. "It's very humbling to know that you're the choice of presbyters from across the church. And you hope to rise to the challenge and be as faithful a servant

'I think I bring a really strong perspective of the unequivocal importance of the local congregation as the heart of the church'
— Rev. Dr. Rick Horst

of Christ in this role as you can be."

Horst was born in Hamilton to Dutch immigrant parents who left their predominantly Dutch Christian Reformed Church for a more multicultural Presbyterian



Responding in Japan

PRESBYTERIANS GAVE MORE than \$134,000 as of April 13 to Presbyterian World Service and Development for the rehabilitation effort in Japan. The funds will support PWS&D's partner, Church World Service, which is coordinating the response with a coalition of Japanese agencies.

The hope is to reach 25,000 people in evacuation centres in the country's northeast, providing mobile health services, essential supplies, and counselling.

Pictured here is a boat washed ashore by the tsunami in Ishinomaki, one of Japan's hardest-hit cities. ■

congregation. Throughout his youth, he remained heavily involved in church and youth ministries, and was ordained as a ruling elder when he was 21.

"There was always a sense that I was evading and avoiding the ministry," he said, noting that in his youth he was interested in working in radio and newswriting. "I thought I could be a more helpful lay person in the church than being ordained. But it came to a place where the inner call was confirmed.

"I am a career congregational

pastor. I think I bring a really strong perspective of the unequivocal importance of the local congregation as the heart of the church. So that's the core of what I bring to the moderator's role. I believe in affirming local congregations and putting focus back on that ... I don't see the church as an institution trying to carry on, but a movement of sharing and caring and healing and hope." ■

Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.

Community News

Record Columnist to Become WCC Worship Consultant

ANDREW DONALDSON, AUTHOR of the *Record's* online In Song column, has been appointed worship consultant for the World Council of Churches.

The position, which is formally called "missionary (consultant) in the area of spirituality and worship in the context of 21st-century ecumenism," will involve preparation and worship leadership in a number of areas including chapel services at WCC headquarters in Geneva and at international conferences.

"The idea is: you think globally and you work locally and vice versa. My job is to be invisible in one sense. My job is to get people excited and knowledgeable about ecumenical possibilities, then get them involved in practical ways. Leading worship, writing music, writing liturgies."

Donaldson has been involved in the Hymn Society for many years, was a member of the Presbyterian Church in Canada task force that created the 1997 *Book of Praise*, and until late last year served as music director at Trafalgar in Oakville, Ont. His new position is funded by the United Methodist Church (U.S.A.), but he says his Presbyterian background should serve him well.

"Presbyterians love dialogue, and as a Presbyterian I'll be listening to different voices and trying to give them a place both in worship and planning meetings."

Donaldson's final In Song column will appear on presbyterianrecord.ca on May 1. ■—C.Purvis

LMA Looks for New H&R Staff

A NEW EMPLOYEE will continue the work of healing and reconciliation animator Lori Ransom after she returns to her position with the federal Department of Indian and Northern

Affairs, the Life and Mission Agency agreed at their March meeting.

"We have worked out a budget that is manageable within existing funds," said Rick Fee, general secretary of the LMA. He stressed that no funding would be needed from Presbyterians Sharing, the national church's main mission and ministry fund. The full-time contract position, which can extend to a maximum of two years, will draw on funds originally set aside for a number of related purposes including aboriginal dispute resolution and work related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The new staffer is expected to begin in August. Ransom, who was hired on a one-year contract in September 2006, had her contract extended for four additional years and plans to return to her position with the government this September.

"It's a pleasure to work with her and we're really going to miss her," said Stephen Allen, associate secretary of Justice Ministries. ■—C.Purvis

Rights for Indigenous Peoples

KAIROS IS ASKING its partner churches to participate in a banner-making campaign in support of the United

Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was endorsed by Canada in November 2010.

The project is part of Kairos' 2010-2011 campaign called, "The Land, Our Life," which looks at the impact extractive industries have on indigenous communities in Canada and around the world and ask Canadians to sign a petition encouraging the Government of Canada to implement the UN Declaration. The campaign concludes with a public event on June 20 in Ottawa.

Banners will be carried by train across Canada to Ottawa, and used in the June event. Local Kairos groups and church groups will meet the "Banner Train" as it goes through their communities, and add their banners to the train.

Visit kairoscanada.org for a resource to assist congregations in banner making. ■—PCC and Kairos

Nunavut Teens Combat Hunger

GRADE-NINE STUDENTS FROM Tusarvik School in Repulse Bay, Nunavut, put their baking talents to good use on March 18. The class of 13 students raised nearly \$400 for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank by baking and selling cinnamon buns, buns, cupcakes and

No Funding Gap for PWS&D

THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL Development Agency is providing a six-month extension in funding for the church's relief and development arm, ensuring there will be no gap in government funding between the end of one five-year agreement and the assessment of a new application.

Following the rejection of one pro-

posal in December 2010, Presbyterian World Service and Development crafted a new application and submitted it at the end of March. If accepted by CIDA, the new program should begin October 1. In the interim, CIDA will continue to fund PWS&D's programs in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Malawi, Tanzania and India. ■—C.Purvis

tarts in their school's kitchen.

"It is the Inuit way to share," said Pauline Kridluar, a grade nine student who helped to bake and sell the goods. "Cooking today was like that."

The students are used to cooking for their community, selling baked goods to raise money for their school's extra curricular activities, and cooking lunch for the community's elders. But this year, the students have been learning about people around the world who don't have enough to eat.

Mary Ellen Cain, the grade-nine teacher, is impressed with her students' willingness to respond.

"I see how generous the people here are with others in the region, and how they send char and caribou to other communities," she said. "This bake sale is another reflection of this generosity—they see a need and they respond to it."

Repulse Bay is a community of about 900 people situated on the Arctic Circle. It is only accessible by air most of the year, and by barge for a short time during the summer. The steep price of food at the community's two stores is in stark contrast to community attitudes around "country food," such as caribou, arctic char, whale, and ptarmigan, which neighbours freely share with one another. ■—CFGB



Teenagers in Nunavut baked and sold various treats in March to benefit the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

New Books Released

TWO NEW BOOKS by Presbyterians are available this month. Rev. Dr. William Klempa's *Exploring the Faith* will be launched during the convocation

celebrations at the Presbyterian College, Montreal on May 10; and Janet Stark's *Final Scenes—Bedside Tales at End of Life* is available through the WMS Book Room.

Exploring the Faith is the second volume of the college's Studies in Theology and Ministry collection. Klempa's collection of essays spans four decades of theological developments, and provides snapshots on various aspects of the history and theology of the Reformed tradition from a uniquely Canadian perspective.

Most of the essays were written while Klempa served as principal of the college between 1978 and 1998. The book is available through the college.

The 80 short and true stories in *Final Scenes* by Janet Stark were composed though years of pastoral care given to those dealing with serious illnesses. The stories are about comfort, hope and healing.

Stark is the spiritual care director and chaplain at the Brockville General Hospital, and an elder at St. Paul's, Kemptville, Ont. She hopes the book will be a resource to healthcare chaplains, healthcare professionals, clergy, and pastoral care volunteers.

And her book has garnered praise from Klempa. In an official endorsement, Klempa said, "*Final Scenes* is a valuable teaching tool for professionals and equally instructive for family members and friends who seek to comfort, help and minister to the dying."

In addition to the WMS Book Room, the book is available through the author for \$15. Email jstark9@cogeco.ca.

■—Joel Coppieters and AM

Trio Prepare for Bike Trip

IN THE NAME of peace in Israel-Palestine, three young women from Kitchener-Waterloo are planning to don bike helmets and embark on a cross-Canada speaking tour this summer.

Although the idea of a cross-country trip came from Julia Heyens, the cause that will drive it is one that has been important to her fellow ➤

Undies for Evangel

TRAFALGAR PRESBYTERIAN IN Oakville, Ont., held a slightly different sort of fundraiser in March, asking for donations of undergarments for Toronto's Evangel Hall Mission.

The congregation responded with "an avalanche" of underwear, according to Rev. Kristine O'Brien, which was collected during a special service. The church's confirmation class of grade seven and eight students then went on a trip to Evangel Hall to deliver the items.

"The response from the congregation was really great—both fun and generous. And Evangel Hall thought this was a good item to have lots of," said O'Brien.

Missions like Evangel Hall are often in need of undergarments, as donors rarely think of these items when donating clothing. Donations must be new and in original packaging. ■—AM



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biker, Hannah Carter, since she attended the Sabeel Centre youth conference in Jerusalem.

"It totally changed my life," said the photographer and member of Knox, Waterloo. After attending the 2009 conference with funding from the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Carter returned impassioned to raise awareness about the plight of Palestinians in Israel. That Christmas, she headed to Cairo to join the Gaza Freedom March, which brought together 1,300 people from 40 countries in an unsuccessful attempt to walk into Gaza.

Carolyn Gray, the third member of the team, will not be cycling but blogging about the journey. She attended a conference at the Sabeel Centre from Feb. 23-28.

The journey, which is planned to begin June 1, aims to raise enough money to sponsor two homes to be built by the Israeli Committee Against

House Demolitions, and to encourage Canadians to learn more about Israel-Palestine and grassroots peace efforts.

The team plans to make presentations in cities along the route, and is hoping to billet with members of local churches and receive help from volunteer drivers. For more information about the trip, booking a speaking engagement or assisting the team, visit becausewecan.ca or email because.we.can@live.ca. ■ —C.Purvis

No Strike for AST Faculty

ALTHOUGH FULL-TIME FACULTY and librarians at the Atlantic School of Theology were poised to strike in late March, an 11th hour agreement reached on March 21 kept them from the picket lines.

The faculty association, which had been recognized as a union in 2010, had been negotiating their first collective agreement with the Halifax university's

board of governors since April of the same year. Salaries proved to be the main stumbling block in negotiations.

An agreement was endorsed by 70 per cent of unionized staff, and ratified on March 23.

The ecumenical university employs eight full-time faculty and three professional librarians, and has about 150 students registered in its degree and certificate programs. ■ —C.Purvis

Ribbon-cutting at Crieff Hills

"THE PINES" AT CRIEFF Hills Retreat and Conference Centre will officially open on May 14. The special day will feature a demonstration on bird banding, guided nature walks, a high ropes challenge and refreshments. The day will culminate with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 2:00.

The new building is part of Crieff's renovation and expansion project, made possible through donations. Visit crieffhills.com for more. ■ —AM

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World News

Souls vs. Stewardship

DESPITE A STRUGGLING economy that has seen record numbers of churches facing foreclosure, American pastors are more concerned about outreach and evangelism than getting congregants to give more, a study from the Barna Group reveals.

Barna conducted 600 interviews with pastors of Protestant and Catholic churches in the U.S. They were asked about the areas they would most like to see develop or grow in the next year. Nearly half (46 per cent) said they are most interested in outreach and evangelism. Only three per cent mentioned stewardship or giving.

"I was amazed and very encouraged by this report," said Gerard Long, president of Alpha USA, which commissioned the study, in a press release.

That pastors put evangelism ahead of financial concerns is especially noteworthy given the current economic climate, Long added. Nearly 200 religious facilities have foreclosed since 2008, up from eight during the previous two years and virtually none in the decade before that.

Long said the new study "reflects a changing trend in the church in America. Jesus taught and lived a 'Go!' model for outreach. People want to see a more missional side to church, making an impact on society."

Karen Plater, head of Stewardship at the Presbyterian Church in Canada, isn't particularly surprised by this view.

"I would agree that 'people want to see a more missional side to church,'" Plater told the *Record*. "The most important thing for the church is the impact that it is having on society and how it is reaching out to people. If that is our focus, then giving and stewardship will follow."

However, a focus on outreach and evangelism shouldn't replace stewardship, according to Plater. "When a lot of people think about stewardship, they automatically think of money, and money to fund the ministry of the church. This is only a small part of stewardship," she said. "Stewardship is about how we live our lives ... and that includes making decisions about how we spend our time, what we do with our skills and resources, how we care for one another, and how we look after God's world. I think most of the pastors who say the most important thing is outreach and evangelism, would follow that up pretty quickly with teaching people about how to live as Christ did—and that's stewardship.

"Stewardship and giving can transform not only the world, but ourselves." ■—PRNewswire and AM

Christians Most Persecuted

THE UK ARM of Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic charity, released a report that says 75 per cent of religious persecution is against Christians, making Christians the most persecuted religious group in the world.

Persecuted and Forgotten? was

released in Glasgow on March 15, and claims persecution of Christians is actually worsening—particularly in those countries where persecution is the most severe. It also notes a serious threat to Christian presence in Iraq and the Holy Land, and threats from Islamic extremism in North Africa and parts of Asia.

Meanwhile, more anti-Christian violence occurred in Pakistan in March. Two Christians were shot and killed and two were wounded after Muslim youths allegedly attacked them outside a church building in Hyderabad, according to reports in Christian media.

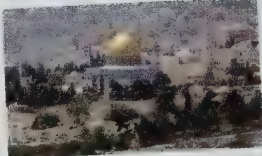
■—Aid to the Church in Need and ENI

Zambian Nurse Recognized

ZAMBIAN NURSE Agnes Lisulo Mulemwa was honored in Geneva in March for helping women in her rural community raise their standard of living, train to become leaders and support health care.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches and the women presidents of regional Swiss Reformed churches awarded Mulemwa the Sylvia Michel Prize, which is named for the first woman to be elected ➤

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ISTANBUL, TURKEY; BETHLEHEM: Church of the Nativity, Shepherds' Fields, boat ride on Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea, Caesarea, Mt. Carmel, Megiddo, Masada, **NAZARETH**, Golan Heights, **JERUSALEM:** old city, Yad Vashem, Davidson Centre, Mount of Olives, Upper Room, Garden Tomb, Via Dolorosa. Optional **JORDAN** extension: Mt. Nebo, Petra, Bethany by the Jordan River — site of Jesus Baptism and more ...

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president of a Swiss regional church.

"I am humbled," Mulemwa told a crowd gathered at the Reformed Church in Murten, for a celebratory service. "It is too much."

Mulemwa created the Liyoyelo Batik Centre in Senanga, Zambia. The project provides training in income generating skills such as making batik and candles, and raising fruit and vegetables.

Mulemwa works with a network of women called the Anamoyo who are known for their community service in the name of the church. ■—*ENI*

White House Issues Challenge

IN A VIDEO message in March, President Barack Obama invited American universities to encourage interfaith cooperation on their campuses through community service. The Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge encourages religious and non-religious organizations to partner with local community organizations or houses of

worship to tackle year-long community service challenges.

"As a Christian who became committed to the church while serving my community, I know that an act of service can unite people of all faiths—or even no faith—around a common purpose of helping those in need. In doing so, we can not only better our communities, we can build bridges of understanding between ourselves and our neighbours," said the President.

The best examples of service and cooperation will be recognized by the White House. ■—*White House Media Affairs Office*

Moving Towards Greater Unity

LEADERS OF THE World Communion of Reformed Churches, of which the Presbyterian Church is a member, and the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council met in Geneva recently to discuss strengthening links among their local churches, and agreed to work

more closely together on common concerns of justice and unity.

"From our perspective this is to be applauded as it is a step toward greater visible unity among Reformed churches," Rev. Dr. Robert Faris, executive director of the Churches' Council on Theological Education in Canada and a Presbyterian minister, told the *Record*.

The DECC, a worldwide fellowship of Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ churches, became an associate member of the WCRC back in June 2010. Robert Welsh, DECC General Secretary, believes the relationship opens new possibilities for creative sharing and increased cooperation.

"We can alert each other on programs of mutual interest, such as consultations on the ordination of women or conferring about our respective dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church," said Welsh.

■—*WCRC and AM*

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



We all need to know that our loving Creator knows us by name. This is especially true of First Nations people, who are striving to restore their sense of identity and purpose in Canadian culture. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is working with Aboriginal people to build strong, healthy relationships through ministries such as the Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church on the Mistawasis Reserve in Saskatchewan and our Healing and Reconciliation initiative. Planned gifts helped build Winnipeg Inner City Mission's new "Place of Hope," and donors are contributing to Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry's feeding program for homeless and marginalized people through the newly established "Feed My Sheep" Trust Fund.

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The Other Six Days Looking for Laughs

SILLY SITES AND UNIQUE IDEAS. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Believe in God Instantly breath spray is one of those silly items you might find around a whimsical minister's office. Like my Moses action figure or my Jesus Heals Band-Aids, Believe in God Instantly breath spray is a thing of beauty for people that cherish a good piece of Christian kitsch.

ROCKIN' CHURCH

In Bogota, Colombia there is a small, non-denominational church. It goes by the Greek name Pantokrator, which is usually translated "All Powerful" or "Almighty" in reference to Christ (ex. 2 Corinthians 6:18). According to its founder, Cristian Gonzalez, Pantokrator is an example of how Christ reaches beyond social barriers. But what makes this church unique is not just its name: it's the music. It holds two services: one "traditional" and the other ... all heavy metal.

FIND IT @ Search [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) for "heavy metal church"

VIDEO

The Many Faces of Benny Hinn is a DVD collection of over nine hours of interviews, clips, documentaries and exposés on Charismatic miracle worker, Benny Hinn. Watch as Benny Hinn heals people en masse by hitting them with his expensive suit coat or spitting on them, and then watch him place curses upon his enemies. But no matter what ... don't miss Canada's own W5 putting Hinn through the ringer.

FIND IT @ the store of [Wittenburg Door.com](http://WittenburgDoor.com)

WEBSITE

Beauty Tips for Ministers by self proclaimed "stage mother to the American clergy" is a rare find. Written from the alter ego personality Peace Bang, this blog talks about everything from hair to contemporary culture to skin care and vestment choices. With just over five years under her belt in advising image-conscious ministers and a rather large following, Beauty Tips for Ministers isn't going anywhere soon. Sometimes serious and sometimes not, it's good for a chuckle from time to time.

FIND IT @ beautytipsforministers.com

BLOG

Crummy Church Signs is a great site for a good laugh or for some signage inspiration. Unlike many other sites claiming to have funny church signs, this one boasts authentic signs found, photographed and submitted by real people. There are clever ones like "If God is your copilot—switch seats!," odd ones like "Jesus for President," and rare, bold ones like "Scumbags Welcome."

FIND IT @ crummychurchsigns.blogspot.com ■

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

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the effort?



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Loving Life

LESSONS LEARNED IN MALAWI. BY ELLEANA HOEKSTRA

I WOKE ON my first morning in Mulanje to the blasting of country and gospel music. The flats where I am staying are for the single nursing and clinician residents—a bunch of 20-somethings living in one place. Everyone knows what everyone is doing at all times, there is zero privacy (thank goodness I grew up in a big family and am used to this) and it's just a big party. We all have our doors open in the evenings and greet each other as we pass by.

During my first two weeks here, I had no running water. I had to walk down the road to a manual water pump and stand in line with a group of Malawian women. When I tried to walk away with my water they all laughed at me because I couldn't carry it on my head. I was so grateful when my water was finally fixed.

Now that I have travelled to different areas in Malawi, I can confidently say that Mulanje is the most beautiful. The mountain towers above the small village and the tea estates are full, green and rambling at its base. The roads are rich and red with clay and the people are so colourful and friendly. Did I mention the stars?! They are the most spectacular I have ever seen.

I have been running most days for exercise and as I run through the tea and look at the mountain it changes colour with the sun and cloud cover. I have a big running fan club of kids who cheer me on and run with me. They are laughing and cheering and all trying to touch me sneakily. Running with ripped clothes, bare feet and a mango in hand, these kids have the biggest smiles and joy about them. One day I had a small group of 16-year-old women with babies on their backs running with me. It was strange to see them laughing and smiling, running in bare feet looking like they had no cares in the world and



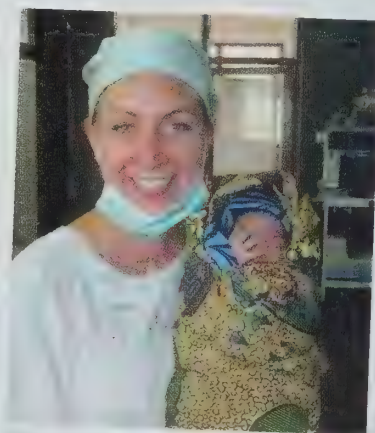
The author (front) tends to a newborn at a hospital in Mulanje, Malawi.

yet they were mothers already—giving their lives to another human being.

My work at the hospital has already evolved. The facility is a different world compared to Queens Hospital in Blantyre. There are separate rooms for the labouring women, usually adequate supplies and mostly enough staff working to appropriately care for the women and their babies.

I spent the first month trying to figure out my place and purpose working with this well-oiled machine. I am feeling so much more a part of the team now that I am a trusted midwife and friend in this group of hard-working women. I have taken an active role in the teaching of students as it gives me an opportunity to have a translator at all times! Most of the village women who use the hospital to have their babies only speak Chichewa and this is my biggest challenge. I have been trying very hard to get a grasp of the language and it's slow going. My

co-workers love teaching me and get a kick out of my pronunciation, but it's all in good fun ... I think. It's challenging to be in a constant state of confusion. Sometimes I feel completely in the dark, struggling to take a deep enough breath; I really miss being able to express myself freely. One of my favourite co-workers had a long chat



with me one afternoon and after she said, "Elleana, talking to you makes my head hurt!" It's a slow-going process, (*pangono, pangono*) little by little. A turning point was after a delivery with a 15-year-old first-time mom who had a big tear; the sister in charge told me I was doing the repair and then she pulled up a chair to watch me. I was under so much pressure but afterward she accepted me as one of them.

There is a sense of loss and grief that many of these women carry with them as part of their labour and birth experience. It's not uncommon for a woman to have had four or five children with only two or three living. Most women have lost a child and that just becomes a part of life. There is a hilarious song that plays on the radio here called, *It's a Part of Life* and the lyrics are ridiculous. A couple of the lines are, "your husband cheats on you, it's a part of life; you get HIV, it's a part of life." These things don't have to be a part of life! There are so many changes to be made.

We often have women come into the labour ward labelled BBA—born before arrival. Many women travel great distances by bike, taxi or foot and are forced to give birth alone somewhere on the side of the road. Sometimes they arrive in high-risk situations including a retained placenta, too much blood loss, or a preterm baby. These women have such amazing strength. They give birth on the side of the road and then walk the rest of the way to the hospital!

At a concert in Blantyre, I had my phone and camera stolen and it made me really sad. My midwife friend, Hannah was there with me and she said, "Elle, it's just material. Remember that it's just material." She said the perfect thing to me, remembering that the real things of value in life don't have a price tag. ■

Elleana Hoekstra is a PCC young adult intern working in Malawi as a midwife for eight months. She is a member of St. Andrew's, Coldwater, Ont.



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Letter from Sudan



A Threat to Peace

DESPITE SEPARATION, A BATTLE OVER OIL MAY LEAD TO MORE UNREST. BY JOHN LEWIS



Guarding a polling station in Sudan.

AFTER A JOURNEY that lasted too long (sailing up the Nile would have been quicker), I am in Juba, South Sudan.

In my time at Kairos, Sudan has been a principal concern of our member churches. I have travelled twice to the country to meet with our partner, the Sudan Council of Churches. This time I am here to observe the referendum that will determine whether the country remains united.

When I began working for Kairos just over six years ago, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed by the warring parties in January 2005, guaranteed the people of southern Sudan the right to a referendum on self-determination. At the same moment, however, the conflict in Darfur was heating up; today, there is still no peace in the western part of Sudan. Hundreds of thousands of Sudanese have died in that ongoing conflict, and millions more have been displaced.

Six years is a long time to wait,

but the people of southern Sudan are finally choosing their future. It's hard not to get caught up in the enthusiasm the people of Juba feel for the coming days. In a few months, it is very likely that the southern Sudanese will formally create a new country in Africa, the continent's 55th independent state. Most people around Juba rejoice, and their joy is infectious. But there are lingering questions, and one of them is oil.

The referendum will begin to clarify positions on who benefits from the considerable oil revenues of Sudan. The oil lies mostly within the boundaries of southern Sudan, while the pipeline to export the oil runs through the north. Currently, both parties benefit enormously from oil revenues.

Southern Sudanese seem all too aware that oil can be a blessing or a curse. Some here say that the 21-year civil war was fought over oil. But in a country with few other known

resources, what options are there other than developing the fields?

There was talk a few years ago about building another pipeline, through Kenya, which would take years to build. Either way—with a new pipeline or not—the two Sudans will need one another. Some of the oil fields even straddle a future border.

Canada, of course, has a stake too. Not only did a Canadian company help build the infrastructure that continues to put wealth in the coffers of the Sudanese government and its military, but Canada refuses to block investment in tar sands oil from companies implicated in the conflict in Darfur. Canada shouldn't deal with Chinese state oil firms, but we do. We are addicted to their wealth just as they are becoming increasingly addicted to our oil.

So, while the euphoria gains strength around Juba for what people perceive as the inevitable outcome of the referendum, there are still many issues which demand serious attention and there will be a massive challenge keeping all the parties focused on resolving them.

But today, there is music in the air and rallies all over town. The people of this region are tired of war, and tired of waiting for their rights: you can see it in their faces and hear it in their voices. They are filled with expectation for what is to come.

And so am I. ■

John Lewis, international human rights coordinator at Kairos, was in South Sudan on behalf of Canadian churches monitoring the referendum. On Jan. 9, South Sudan voted overwhelmingly for independence. PWS&D supports Kairos's global partnerships.



PART ONE

God Provides

AND MEANS TO BRING OUT THE GOOD. BY STEPHEN HAYES

Providence.

The very word sounds old-fashioned, perhaps a bit out of touch and even boring. Maybe people used to talk that way, but now we rarely hear the word used. So does all of this matter and what's it all about?

"Providence" has within it the word "provide." The word may even go back to the Old Testament story of God's outrageous demand that Abraham sacrifice his only son, Isaac. As they approach the place of sacrifice, Isaac asks his father about the sacrificial animal and the famous reply

is, "God will provide a beast for the sacrifice." (Genesis 22:8) I can't say definitely that the word developed from this Bible passage, but even if it did not, the story involves providence, defined as "the protective care of God or nature." God did provide, even as Abraham said. ►

It is not enough to believe that God exists. It is as important to ask what sort of God we believe in. Our God cares for us. God is Creator, the source of life and the one in whom we live and move and have our being

The reason this is so important is that when you think about it, this idea constitutes the very basis of faith, of our approach to God and prayer. It is not enough to believe that God exists. It is as important to ask what sort of God we believe in. Our God cares for us. God is Creator, the source of life and the one in whom we live and move and have our being. If God does not care for us, then why have faith? If God does not care for us, then why pray? So a word that starts out looking rather abstract and barely connected to us, on reflection is seen

as foundational. Without these ideas, there would be no Christian religion.

One of the reasons the word has faded from our modern consciousness is that we do not understand how our free will intersects with God's provident love for us. Can we really believe that God is involved with our lives and if so, how?

I think it is important that when we ask the question of how our will and the provident will of God intersect in our individual lives, we reply that we just don't know. It is critical that we learn to live with this paradox, for virtually every page of the Bible implies both our free will and responsibility, and the majesty and power of God, a God that is active and powerful in our lives.

Acknowledging that we don't know the mechanics of this intersection of our free will and the providential hand of God in our lives relieves us of the pressure to explain everything. We can't. But perhaps the situation is like a master chess player playing a beginner. We all know who will win, but even the master does not control every move the beginner makes. Yet the outcome is never in doubt and ultimately the master is in control. So it is with God and us. Providence, I think, is something like that.

God is love. God cares. God wants what is best for us in much the same way that a mother beholds her child

and wants what is best for her. Biblical language compares God to a hen watching her chicks and a father loving his children. That is the language of providence and it certainly matters.

The other reason people have trouble with this concept is related to the ambiguity and cruelty of some of human existence. There is just so much suffering in the world. In the midst of all this, can we actually accept the idea that God cares and is ultimately in control?

Just as we must allow no phony explanations in bringing together the intersection of the human and the divine will, so also we have to face this one directly. Interestingly, the answer is the same again. Why does a good God allow bad things to happen to good people? The answer is that we just do not know.

But then why believe in providence, in a God of love? The answer is that we have many other reasons for doing so: mostly we experience life as good, even wonderful; all sorts of people suffer and yet are able to believe; the Bible and the witness of the church and its people speak abundantly of the love of God. In a particular way we behold the love of God in Christ, especially in his sacrificial death on the cross. *Living Faith* (9.3.3) puts it this way:

*As we behold our Saviour
on the cross,
We are convinced of
God's love for us.
Faced with the pain and
agony of the world,
Only a suffering God can help.
God is with us in our anguish.*

The Old Testament story of Joseph, sold into slavery by his brothers, illustrates the meaning of providence. Joseph sums it up by asserting: "You meant to do me harm; but God meant to bring good out of it ..." (Genesis 50:20). ■

Rev. Dr. Stephen Hayes is a retired Presbyterian minister living in Ottawa.



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**PART TWO**

Divine Power

GOD IS IN CHARGE OF HISTORY AND NATURE.

BY PHILIP LEE

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.*
—William Cowper

Understanding the doctrine of providence first involves distinguishing it from the doctrine of predestination, because these two Presbyterian emphases have often become blurred and

confused. The doctrine of predestination involves God choosing Israel and Christ's church for a special task and destiny within creation. The doctrine of providence on the other hand involves God's loving provision for the whole of creation.

The very first sentence of the Apostles' Creed—"I believe in God the Father almighty"—is an affirmation that God is all mighty, capable of handling all situations. Of course, in making this straightforward confession of

faith, we are confronted immediately with questions. If God the Father is almighty, capable of providing for the welfare of His creatures, why does the world appear to be so uncared for? Any discussion of providence must deal with the question so clearly put by Rabbi Harold Kushner, why do bad things happen to good people? Or with the biblical obverse of the question, "Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive?" (Jeremiah 12:1) ►

The good news is that even the most awful events can be made to work for good by the power and love of God

Certainly, part of the answer can be found in our own sinfulness. We sinful human beings are the authors of many of our woes, from petty daily hatefulness to the Holocaust. However, nature itself can also be terribly destructive to human life and to other creatures. Natural disasters and diseases also contribute to making this beautiful planet a "vale of tears." Why is it that the Almighty's provision for the world often seems so haphazard and unfair?

Of course, there are no definitive answers to these questions, but we can search the scriptures for some hints and clues. While preaching on God's oversight of the cosmos and addressing the anxieties of his audience, Jesus says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs on your head are numbered. Fear not, therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:29-31)

Jesus is not assuring us that all sparrows will be kept from harm, or that nothing bad will ever happen to us. He is not answering our questions about the dark side of existence on this planet. He is saying that nothing that happens is too insignificant to fall

below the divine radar. He is speaking of providence as divine power and divine concern. Our Creator is in charge of both history and nature. Nothing happens without God's knowledge; nothing happens without God's concern.

Writing to a fearful Christian congregation, the Apostle Paul goes so far as to say, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28) This audacious promise assures the faithful that everything is being ultimately coordinated for good. Dreadful things can happen to God's people. Christians are as susceptible to the "dangers, toils and snares" as anyone else. The good news is that even the most awful events can be made to work for good by the power and love of God.

The doctrine of providence does not espouse the monstrous idea that "all things happen for good," or that God approves of all the deplorable realities of life. The biblical idea of providence does assure us, however, that our God is able to deal with whatever happens, can transform the worst into the best, and can even use the malevolent intentions of the wicked

and appropriate them into His purpose of salvation for the world.

For Christians, the principal clue to the divine *modus operandi* is given through the Messiah's crucifixion and the Resurrection. At the crucifixion, the prototypical injustice of human history, the conclusive destruction of good by the forces of evil, the Almighty is so angry that "the curtain of the temple was rent from top to bottom, and the earth shook and the rocks were split." (Matthew 27:50-51)

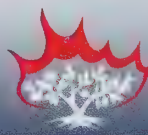
Despite the anger of God, the crucifixion was not called off; there was no last minute reprieve from the governor. "Twelve legions of angels" were not sent to release the Messiah. (Matthew 26:53) In some mysterious way, this inhuman scene—similar to thousands of other inhuman scenes—had to take place. On the road to Emmaus, the Risen Christ scolds his disciples with the words, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25-26)

The doctrine of providence is critical to our understanding of Christian faith. It has to do with trusting that our Creator is also our Saviour, despite so much apparent evidence to the contrary. ■

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*Rev. Dr. Philip J. Lee, minister emeritus of Grace, Saint John, N.B., is the author of *Against the Protestant Gnostics and numerous theological essays.**

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Paul Preaching in Athens
by Raphael
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Paul in Athens

WE HAVE A PLACE IN THE MARKET PLACE OF IDEAS. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

May 29 reading:
Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:22-31

Paul was convinced his purpose was to take the good news of Jesus, risen from the dead, to the far corners of the world.

The elders in Jerusalem breathed caution. Rome tolerated Jews, so long

as they didn't make trouble. If the Jews who followed Jesus stayed close to temple and synagogue they wouldn't be troubled. The elders decided Paul could speak to Gentiles, after he preached to Jews, and those who had converted to Judaism.

Paul went to Athens. He did as he was told. He went to the synagogue. Read and reasoned over the scriptures. Then to the agora. Where people bought goods and services, and traded ideas. You could learn some philosophy while you bought your dinner.

Some decided Paul was a dealer in foreign gods. A "seed-picker." He was all over the philosophical map. That took him to the council. The eminent men of the city would decide if Paul was worth hearing. Paul was honoured with a few minutes to speak. If what we read today is all Paul said, it's an example of clarity and brevity. Paul could think on his feet.

He was distressed to see idols on every corner in Athens. There were temples and religious dining halls all over the city. Paul didn't get up and say they should all be torn down. He didn't ➤

say the Athenians were all wrong.

Paul found something in the dreaded culture of idol worship to affirm, and build on. One of the altars of Athens was dedicated "To an Unknown God." The people of Athens were thoroughly religious.

Paul said, "Let me tell you about this god you don't know, but allow might be real. This god is greater than all the rest." He didn't quote the Old Testament. His text was from a poet, Aratus. An author his audience already knew.

Paul met the Athenians on their own ground, with their own words about one God, who created just one race, the human race. Then Paul came to his punch line. The distinctive Christian message. Jesus is the One who shows the way to know and to live in this God.

Paul finished with the good news. God raised Jesus from death, to show that Jesus is the One.

Some at the Areopagus were offended by the idea of resurrection. Others said, "Maybe we'll hear more another day." A few believed, including a member of the council, and a prominent woman of the city.

Paul met the Athenians with respect. He found truth in strange places. He allowed God to speak, first, in the words of a poet. In the religiosity of Athens. In the market place of ideas. The testing-place of truth.

Have we, in our beloved Presbyterian Church, withdrawn from the market place of ideas? One common image of the church in our part of the world is of a secret society, like a dinner club in ancient Athens. A refuge from reality, obsessed with preserving pure tradition. The only way that image will die is if we go out and speak up.

The challenge we face today is to be ever more open. Yes, discerning.

Yes, testing new truth and claims to truth. But not afraid to put our truth to the test. To add our voices to the mix. To share what we believe. Always with respect for others, but never ashamed to be who we are.

Paul crafted his message to meet his audience. But he didn't stop at that. He proclaimed Jesus, risen from the dead.

I believe there's a receptive audience for a witness that's open to what others have to say. And what they may already believe. A witness that lets God speak, even if God chooses to speak through what's new and strange to us.

We have a place in the market place of ideas. We can, and we must, speak in ways people around us will understand, and hear as good news. ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence De Wolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.

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The Improbable Possible

MOTHERING AND LESSONS IN FAITH. **BY JOYCE ENGEL**

Although Teresa is tiny, she speaks forcefully, powerfully, quickly. We meet in my office because she needs a break from home. She learned of my study on older mothering through a friend over the internet. She explains that meeting and talking with people on the internet is like meeting people on a bus; you tell them everything. Her enthusiasm for mothering is evident in

her expressive speech and rapid flow of ideas. Her daughter is three and is Teresa's life and her "greatest joy."

Teresa found out she was pregnant with Hannah after undergoing treatment for cervical cancer. At first, she was incredulous about the news. She stared at her physician and told him that he should "run the test again ..." Then, "I had to figure out how to tell my poor husband. I was 38. Oh my God. What if something was going to

be wrong with my baby?"

Hannah was born 23 years and 12 miscarriages after the birth of a baby boy that Teresa gave up for a life that she hoped he could have ... and that she could not provide at the age of 16. For years, she lit the candles on Andrew's birthday cake.

Teresa pauses to cry. She asks for the recorder to be turned off, briefly. She is caught in that moment between the reality of loss and the improbability ➤

and blessing of Hannah's birth. "Hannah is not just Hannah. She is Andrew. She's every baby I've ever lost."

Each birth is a miracle; it is an event that can never be fully taken for granted. For the older mother, the notion of miracle becomes even larger. For some older mothers, pregnancy comes soon after the decision, which is often made with great deliberation. For others, the bags that signal readiness for birth have been packed and unpacked many times. Loss of baby, loss of dreams ... hope and empty arms, as the womb withers. For Teresa and for several mothers in the study, the idea of pregnancy and birth is merged with the probability of impossibility and yet, with an enduring faith in the potential of a miracle. I wonder if that is what Sarah, the much-loved matriarch and mother of the Jews shared with these mothers?

We are told in Genesis that despite God's promise that Abraham would sire children that would lead a great nation, Sarah remained barren at 90. (Genesis 17:17) We don't know, exactly, how old Sarah was when she conceived, but the point is that by any standard, Sarah was well beyond what might remotely be considered childbearing years. For Sarah, like the mothers in my study, hers was a womb that still leapt in hope, mourned its emptiness, and acknowledged the probability of impossibility. It is no wonder that she and Abraham greeted the news of her pregnancy with skepticism, incredulity, and, yes, even laughter, just as some modern older mothers, such as Teresa, may greet the news of their improbable miracle. "Run the test again ..."

The Virgin Birth, too, brought with it skepticism and this same incredulity. It couldn't; it shouldn't; it wasn't. But, it was. And from the pairing of the impos-

sible and improbable with great hope, a miracle of enormous proportions occurred. Teresa's daughter, Hannah, returns to her the joy of a child to hold. Sarah's son, Isaac, led nations. Jesus leads us to resurrection and new life.

It is not difficult to believe in the obvious. It takes great faith to overcome the doubt that comes with what seems improbable, impossible, and beyond the reach of humanly reasoned expectation. Faith in the new life that comes with the birth, death and resurrection of our Lord and that abides in spite of the barrenness of the human spirit is like the commitment of hope that the barren woman gives to her womb. From such, can come great gifts—a miracle, in fact. ■

Joyce Engel is associate professor of nursing at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont.



Down by the Riverside

**137th General Assembly
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Please pray for safe travels and for guidance as they discern God's will for our denomination.



Letting Go

MOTHER AND SON. BY VIVIAN KETCHUM

Early March 2011:

Tyler,

I had to go sit in your room, just so I could feel close to you again. I sense you are slipping away and I don't want to let you go. The very thought of that brings tears to my eyes and makes it difficult to even breathe. I sit on your bed, looking around your room and

it is full of memories of you. Hockey sticks in the corner; you loved playing floor hockey. A guitar leaning against the wall; you were learning how to play and the sound you made often scared the cats. Why is it that parts of your room are a total mess, newspapers laying here and there, clothes scattered on the floor, yet your uniforms for work are neatly hanging in your closet? Boxes of CDs are stacked there too.

Sadly, there is also an old ➤

I would listen to his laboured breathing and the reality of the situation would hit me. My son was dying, and soon

hospital bag from when you were discharged after the first surgery laying on the bed, and next to that are the unopened Christmas presents that are waiting for you. Ugly memories of the past few weeks lay next to the fonder memories of you playing loud music. I don't want to let you go.

I also went and found old pictures of you as a baby, a child and an adult. It hurts to know these might be all the pictures that I will have of you. There might not be any pictures of you with your children or your future significant other. You were just getting set to fly on your own and test your wings. You often talked of saving up for school and future career choices. I can still hear the excitement in your voice when you shared your dreams for the future. Tyler, I don't want to let you go. Every part of me is refusing to let you go, but I feel there is quiet calm that will give me the strength to hold up. I sense that when it is time for me to let go of your hand, you will be at peace and at a place where there is no more pain. Until then I am grateful for each day that I can feel the warmth of your hand and the kindness of friends who are supporting me during this dark moment in my life.

Later March 2011:

Monday morning. I woke up quickly and glanced over to the hospital bed to see if my son was still with us. My son was losing his brave fight with a brain tumour and family



Vivian Ketchum and her son, Tyler, at the hospital.

members were spending the last moments with him. It has been a little over four months since the diagnosis and I was feeling a sense of disbelief at how quickly I was losing him. I had only hours, not a lifetime left with my son.

I got up and went over to his bed and gave him a hug and kiss. It felt great to hug him without any tubes or machines in my way. Just feeling the warmth of his cheeks and hands gave me a false sense of hope that he would be alright. But then I would listen to his laboured breathing and the reality of the situation would hit me. My son was dying, and soon.

I put some gospel music on and washed my face. I walked around the tiny room. My son's dad, Lenny, was there as was my son's auntie Pauline. I was planning on going home for about an hour to wash up, but Tyler's last moments were near, so instead I phoned Rev. Margaret Mullin, of Winnipeg Inner City Missions to let her know that Tyler's breathing had changed.

I went and sat by his bed and remembered fondly the moments that I first brought him home as a baby. How I kept touching him. Smelling the newbornness. Examining his tiny fingers and

toes, awed by how perfect they seemed to me. Now my son was 24 years old. I again touched his arms and hands, gently. Put my head on his hand and let my tears flow.

I noticed the faint smell of Lenny's cigarette smoke mixed with

our son's unique smell. I was trying my best to memorize his features, his smell and how he felt, the warmth of his hands and face. I needed to capture these memories. Lenny was also doing what he could to capture his private memories of our son by tenderly washing his face, ears and hands. Clipping his toenails and making sure his fingernails were neatly trimmed. Just like when our son was a baby.

Just then, Rev. Margaret stepped into the room; she had brought lunch. We sat around the bedside and ate. I glanced at the clock wishing that I could turn it back. Back to when my son was healthy and full of life. Suddenly there was a change in my son's breathing and I put my hand on his chest, his heart was beating rapidly. I glanced at the reverend, then Lenny told us he needed to step out for awhile.

I was still sitting by my son's bedside holding his hand, Pauline at the end of the bed holding his feet, and Rev. Margaret was holding his other hand. I kept telling my son that I loved him and that I would be alright, and then I realized that he would be missing me also. I put my hand up to his cheek and felt his face nudging it gently.

I was trying my best to memorize his features,
his smell and how he felt, the warmth of his hands and face.
I needed to capture these memories

My son was in a deep coma and shouldn't have been able to move at all. My son was letting me know that he loved me. Earlier he was twitching his finger when his dad was sitting next to him and giving his auntie slight hand squeezes. My baby was letting us know he loved us. It was 1:20 and my son was taking his last breaths. I was breathing with him until Rev. Margaret told me to breath normally.

Five minutes later, my son was shrugging his shoulders as he was throwing off his physical body and breathing his last gasp and then I actu-

ally saw something leave his body. The reverend asked my sister, Pauline to get the nurse, who came to check his vitals. There was still a heartbeat but very weak. Then at 1:45, my son's eyes opened and they were very clear. I wish I could have seen what he was looking at, at that moment. Awe and light were what I saw in his eyes. Then my son's face went very pale and his heart ceased to beat.

My baby was gone.

When my son's last moments came, it was very peaceful. I held his hand. I think Tyler waited for his dad

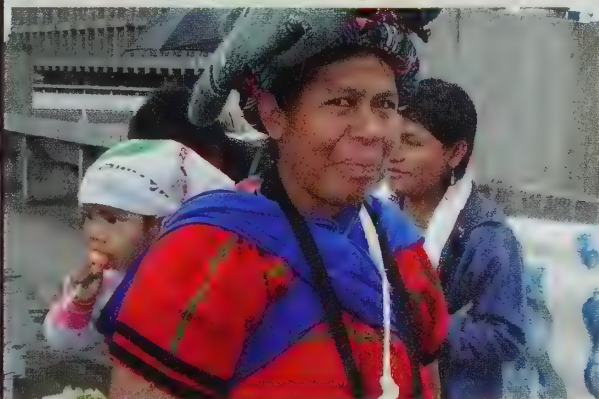
to leave the room before he left, maybe knowing this was very difficult for his dad. When his dad came back into the room, Rev. Margaret told Lenny our son was gone. Lenny collapsed on his knees by the bed in tears.

Tyler Ketchum, 24, was diagnosed with a brain tumour last Thanksgiving. He had surgery just before Christmas, and again in early March. He died March 7th. ■

Vivian Ketchum lives in Winnipeg.

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Mind the Gap

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE WOMAN OR MAN. BY ROLAND DEVRIES

Love

*me tender, love me true...
Scratch that.*

How about: "When a ma-an loves a wo-man ..." Never mind.

Can an article exploring love between man and woman begin with anything other than clichéd lyrics? And a related question: Is there anything new to be said about love between these two? Well, let me venture something on the subject and do so by turning, strangely perhaps, to the logic of sexual difference.

Ours is a culture that celebrates difference. (Or, does it? Actually, our culture celebrates only those differences it finds compelling, which suggests that its 'celebration of difference' is at the same time an underhanded attempt to marginalize certain other differences. But I digress, perhaps.) In any case, notwithstanding this wider celebration of difference, past decades have seen a steady and serious erosion of respect for the notion of sexual difference.

At some level this erosion is entirely understandable. Historically, woman's essence and identity have been defined in terms of the essence and identity of man. She is his helper, his opposite or

his complement. The sexes have been defined, furthermore, according to the following logic and associations, with woman generally getting the short end of the stick:

male / female
reason / instinct
spiritual / natural
active / passive
public / private

As is apparent, this framework cuts woman off from full access to civil, political and religious contexts. It largely relegates her to the domestic sphere.

In attempting to overturn this centuries-old diminishment of woman, the logic of difference has been displaced in favour of the logic of equality. But as some have pointed out, with this emphasis on equality, women have simply exchanged being not-men for being like-men. The French feminist Luce Irigaray puts it like this: "The demand to be equal presupposes a point of comparison. To whom or what do women want to be equalized? To men? To a salary? To a public office? To what

standard? Why not to themselves?"

For those who believe that the creation narratives of Genesis make some kind of authoritative statement about the human, the question of sexual difference cannot be ignored. Yet a question hangs over text and tradition: If we preserve the logic of sexual difference, won't we inevitably take man as woman's measure, diminishing her in the process?

Perhaps not. It turns out that the best account of sexual difference is not one that defines the distinct natures of woman and man. Rather, the best account of sexual difference is one that focuses on how woman and man relate in the face of their undefinable difference—how they relate to one another in view of the fact that each is fundamentally a mystery to the other. This brings us back to where we started since what we're really talking about is the love expressed between (a) man and (a) woman.

This idea of sexual difference can be defended and clarified by way of appeal to Genesis 2:23. In that text the earth creature (the mud man) stands before the one just formed from his rib and makes this wondering declaration: "This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called 'isha' (woman) for out of 'ish' (man) this one was taken."

These poetic words highlight both sameness and difference. Regarding sameness the man perceives woman as one who is suitable to him ➤



We cannot set out the substantive difference between woman and man—neither one can be finally pinned down as ‘this’ or ‘that’

in a way that the animals were not. When the human consisted of the earth creature alone in the garden, the human was incomplete—but with the creation of woman is the creation and fullness of the human, as two. They are suitable to one another, meaning that between them is the possibility (at last!) of meaningful conversation and companionship. But notice that this emphasis on sameness doesn't license us to say anything substantial about what it is to be man or woman.

It is equally important to notice that in Genesis 2:23 the man does not name the woman. In fact, man's naming of woman (parallel to the naming of the animals) only happens when human self-alienation from God enters the picture and begins to be felt also in the relationship between woman and man. It is only in Genesis 3:20 that we read: "The man named his wife Eve ..." Prior to human alienation, man does not define woman or determine her

place. Rather, in astonished wonder he merely affirms her difference from him (he is *ish*, she *isha*), a difference that does not preclude the possibility of companionship between them.

We cannot, then, set out the substantive difference between woman and man—neither one can be finally pinned down as 'this' or 'that'. Rather, sexual difference is a dynamic, relational reality that comes to expression as man and woman 'mind the gap'—when they relate to one another in ways that acknowledge the fundamental mystery of the other.

It is helpful to bring in the notion of wonder here. In speaking of sexual difference as dynamic encounter, Irigaray writes: "This other, male or female, should surprise us again and again, appear to us as new, very different from what we knew or what we thought he or she should be." For me (mud man version 9.23, with software glitches all his own), to encounter a woman is to encounter someone who is other than me—one who resists my every attempt to define her in terms of my ideas and identity. Before her I can only express astonished joy. The challenge is to cultivate this sense of wonder and allow it to come to expression in very concrete ways—my wife can vouch for the fact that I sometimes (often!) find this a challenge.

All of this sits fairly well within the context of the church, where we continue to wrestle with the question of what it means to be woman and man—

what it means to live the human as two. While we confess our unity in the Body of Christ—our oneness in Christ—this insistence on unity/oneness cannot translate into a denial of sexual difference or into an insistence on sameness (which is a refusal of God's gift of creation). To live the reality of sexual difference in the context of the church requires an acknowledgment of the other's mystery—it also requires a stepping back so that she is set free to become fully alive in relation to Christ, in the exercise of Spirit-given gifts, and in the shared life of the worshipping, missional community that is the church.

Micheal O'Siadhail's poem, *Roofing* sounds just the right note in relation to all of this:

*A roof is framing
our slanted intimacy.
Unless each of these
matching couples
Beds snugly down into
opposite walls,
The timbers sag.
Somehow we're stronger
In separateness;
this slopping encounter
Our braced ridge,
our tie of ecstasy. ■*

Rev. Dr. Roland J. DeVries is minister at Knox Crescent Kensington and First, Montreal. This article is taken from his 2008 thesis on Søren Kierkegaard and Luce Irigaray.



Mike Birks is a Young Adult Intern working on an agricultural project in Nicaragua with CEPAD, a partner of Presbyterian World Service and Development. CEPAD (The Council of Protestant Churches in Nicaragua) works to serve poor communities and to promote justice, peace and equitable solidarity with the aim of improving quality of life.

www.presbyterian.ca/mikebirks

Mike's work is supported by *Presbyterians Sharing...*

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Rediscovering Women's Voices

Lost biblical interpreters
found again.

By Nancy Calvert-Koyzis

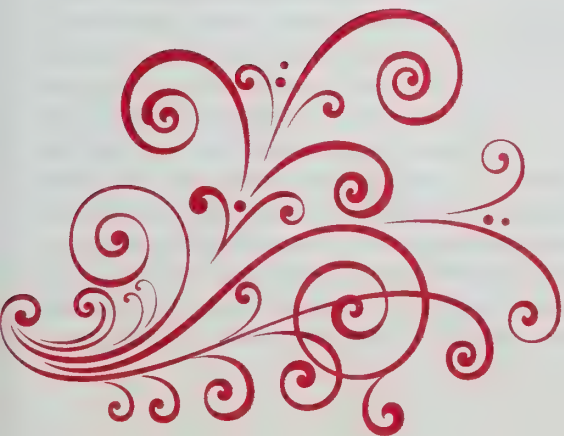


Ever heard of Katherine Bushnell?
Lee Anna Starr?
Antoinette Brown Blackwell?

Probably not.



They were all 19th-century authors and speakers who made their marks through their interpretations of the Bible. In fact, although women of their era wrote over 1,000 books on the Bible, their voices have been lost to us today. Nineteenth-century women were generally barred from universities, and without this connection to academia, their work was not deemed to be important enough to include in histories of biblical interpretation, or to be remembered. Part of the problem, of course, is that there are still relatively few women who are biblical scholars and have the passion to resurrect the voices of their female colleagues from centuries past.





These 19th-century female biblical interpreters recognized that the Bible had sometimes been used to deny them equal rights in the church and in society. For example, Methodist pastor Lee Anna Starr (1853-1937) became convinced that faulty translations and narrow interpretations of the Bible had fostered the subordina-

tion of women. She published *The Ministry of Woman* (1900) and *The Bible Status of Woman* (1926) in which she supported her conviction that women should be allowed to preach in pulpits and vote in the American public sphere.

Methodist Episcopal missionary Katherine Bushnell (1855-1946) noticed that the Bible was sometimes translated from the Greek and Hebrew into English in ways that favoured men, and that consequent interpretations led to reprehensible actions by Christian men towards women. For example, she was appalled by the sexual double standard of the time that allowed for prostitution in lumber camps in northern Michigan and Wisconsin, and overseas in brothels in British India and China. Her book, *God's Word to Women* (1923) was the culmination of her years of study on these topics.

Like Starr and Bushnell, Congregationalist and later Unitarian pastor Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825-1921)

was well educated. When she applied to the theological course of study at Oberlin College, Ohio, she was not admitted as a regular student in that department like her male peers. Other students and professors' wives tried to dissuade her from her goal of becoming a minister, and her own family declined to assist her financially to help her reach her goals.

[The creation of Eve, Adam's helpmate] was to give him a companion, in all respects his equal; one who was like himself a free agent, gifted with intellect and endowed with immortality; not a partaker merely of his animal gratifications, but able to enter in to all his feelings as a moral and responsible being.



Man ... was created a little lower than the angels, [and] crowned with glory and honour ... but slavery has wrested the sceptre of dominion from his hand ... and torn the crown from his head. Slavery has disrobed him of royalty, put on him the collar and the chain, and trampled the image of God in the dust.

—Sarah Moore Grimké, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Woman* and *An Epistle to the Clergy of the Southern States*

Early in her theological studies, a professor assigned her and another female student an essay on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12, two New Testament passages that appear to forbid women from speaking in public. Accepting the challenge, Brown Blackwell showed that Paul's instructions did not forbid a woman to be a public teacher, as long as she had a message worth communicating. Her essay was good enough to be published in the *Oberlin Quarterly Review* (1849) alongside the essays of her professors.

Brown Blackwell dodged criticisms of her public speaking throughout her life. Other women involved in the

struggle for women's rights later disapproved of her for her affiliation with what they saw as the corrupt and discriminatory institutional church. Yet she continued her religious affiliations, and used her capable exegetical skill to argue for women's rights in the church and in society.

Recognizing that the interpretation of the Adam and Eve story in Genesis 1-3 was often at the root of the

limiting views of the role of women in society, Sarah Moore Grimké set out to prove that women were created as equal to men. She had been privately tutored in subjects appropriate for young ladies, but also learned Greek, Latin, philosophy and law from her brothers and father. She used her knowledge of Hebrew, for example, to show that when the woman was spoken of as a “help meet” in Genesis 2, it referred to her as his equal in every way. Her sister, Angelina Emily Grimké Weld, also used Adam and Eve’s relationship to argue that men and women had equal rights in every way, including the right of the woman to fulfil her potential as a person, which would bring glory to God.

I have to admit, when I realized that women had been writing essays in support of women’s ministry since the middle of the 19th century, if not before—research is still ongoing—I was both elated and frustrated. Elated because this put me in connection with female voices from the past who had argued in ways similar to my own arguments in favour of women in ministry in conservative Christian circles. But I was also frustrated because I and other women who pursued ordination in the mid-to-late 20th century had been forced to formu-

late our arguments ourselves without the benefit of listening to earlier voices, and had no access to their guidance and support. Unlike male colleagues who generally had literary connections with male voices from

the past, my female colleagues and I had been robbed of these resources. These women’s works had not been considered important enough to mention in scholarly academic literature on the Bible, and, for the most part, these women, among others, still remain unheard.

Nineteenth-century female interpreters also tackled some of the social problems of their day, such as British Anglican Josephine Butler (1808-1906) who used the story of the outcast Hagar to support her work with prostitutes who had been forced into their occupation through a lack of societal support and financial need. Jewish scholar Grace Aguilar used biblical accounts in *The Women of Israel*

(1845) to remind female Jews of their dignified heritage and to oppose the discrimination of fellow English Jews who, for example, were not allowed to vote or establish businesses in the city of London. In *The Battles of the Bible* (1852) Scottish Presbyterian Eliza Smith inter-

This exegesis [of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35] makes the passage have nothing whatever to do with the question of public teaching. The females were not forbidden to take part in the work of instructing the church, of speaking, “either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine,” or of doing anything else which they had the wisdom and ability to do ... and moreover ... being taught by the Spirit of the mighty God, they did actually take part in these exercises.

—Antoinette Brown Blackwell, *Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35; And 1 Timothy 2:11, 12*, *Oberlin Quarterly Review*



The twelve ... were not always actuated by the highest motives ... they thought largely of an exalted position to be given them, when their Master should come into a kingdom of earthly glory. But the women followed with no other motive than to make themselves of use to Jesus, and to his disciples ... [and] Christ exalted them. He gave them visions on the Resurrection morning that no one else had. He made the witness of women the very meat and marrow of his gospel.

—Katherine Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women*

Women who pursued ordination in the mid-to-late 20th century had been forced to formulate arguments without the benefit of listening to earlier voices, and had no access to their guidance and support

interpreted biblical texts through the lens of middle class values of industry and respectable culture in order to encourage the working classes to a better life and challenge the privileges and patronage of the upper classes. Sarah Grimké, who, along with her sister, (see above) was widely known for her abolitionist activities, wrote *Epistle to the Clergy of the Southern States*, in which, using the Bible, she argued against the institution of slavery. While the pamphlet regrettably included anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic statements in accord with many middle-class perspectives of the time, it was forceful enough for Southern clergy to ban both sisters from Charleston, South Carolina, where they grew up.

While many of the names of female interpreters have been forgotten, one interpreter is still very well known today for her classic novel. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was instrumental in putting an end to slavery in the United States.

Unknown to most, its author, Harriet Beecher Stowe, also published works of biblical interpretation, most notably *Footsteps of the Master* (1877) and *Woman in Sacred History* (1873). Through her biblical interpretation in these volumes, Stowe spoke to many of the issues women of her era—particularly those of the middle class—faced.

Like many other 19th-century women, Stowe had lost

children, and in her case sons, to disease and fatal accidents. These losses coloured her interpretation of the Virgin Mary. Stowe believed that among all other women, Mary was particularly blessed because she knew from the angel Gabriel's announcement to her that her son, Jesus was to grow to adulthood and she would avoid the heartache of

the loss of young children so many mothers had experienced: "She knew that the child she adored was not to die till he had reached man's estate—she had not fear that accident, or sickness, or any of those threatening causes which give sad hours to so many other mothers, would come between him and her."

Stowe, like other women of her time, supported the right of women to vote. This was because she believed that mothers had a powerful influence on society as the moral guide and educator of their children, and that these qualities could also be put to use for the improvement of society. For

Stowe, Mary's influence in domestic frugality extended to Jesus' feeding the 5,000, for example, when he had "the fragments of the feast picked up and carefully stored in baskets, 'that nothing should be lost.'"

Jesus' parable of the kingdom of heaven that is likened to the leaven hidden in three measures of flour signified that "doubtless he had often watched his mother in the homely

This regulation of duty by mere circumstance of sex ... has robbed woman of essential rights, the right to think and speak and act on all great moral questions ... the right to fulfil the great end of her being as a moral, intellectual and immortal creature, and of glorifying God in her body and spirit which are His.

—Angelina E. Grimké, *Letters to Catherine Beecher*



"And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at the time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah ... and the children of Israel came unto her for judgment." This simple description evinces that the greatness of Deborah consisted not at all in outward state, in semblance of high rank ... but simply in her vast superiority and mental and spiritual requirements.

—Grace Aguilar, *The Women of Israel*



process of bread making.” This domestic influence as well as the intimacy of Mary and Jesus’ relationship due to the absence of a father, meant for Stowe that “... there was in Jesus more of the pure feminine element than in any other man. It was the feminine element exalted and taken in union with divinity.” And, for Stowe, it was this “feminine element” that could change the world.

Interestingly, Stowe also believed that Mary and Joseph were both of royal lineages, since they were descended from King David. For Stowe, they were reduced to the “poverty and simple life” of peasants, yet their consciousness “of royal blood and noble birth gave to them a secret largeness of view and nobility of feeling which distinguished them from common citizens.” The birth of Jesus in an animal stall, for Stowe, was a “trial and humiliation” to them as they “were left to touch the very lowest descent of humiliation, outcasts from among men [sic], glad to find a resting place with the beasts of the stall.”

While female interpreters were not perfect and were influenced by some of the elitist, anti-Semitic, and racist attitudes of their day, their writings still influenced their societies in positive ways. Most of them were also privileged and middle or upper class, although they certainly did not enjoy the same opportunities as their male peers. Fortunately, a committed cadre of Canadian biblical scholars

such as Marion Taylor, Heather Weir, Agnes Choi and Christine de Groot have been working to bring the work of historical female interpreters to light. I have been privileged to work with them in this important project.

We still live in societies in which those in the underbelly of society are vilified, where Jews are sometimes victims of hate crimes or discrimination, or the privileges of the wealthy obstruct the advancement of the underprivi-

leged. The Grimké sisters, Bushnell, Star, Brown Blackwell, Aguilar, Butler and Stowe all remind us that while the Bible can still be used to marginalize people and to restrict them from using their gifts and abilities for the good of church and society, it can also be used to support, encourage and inspire them. Listening to these women—and scads of others like them—can only enrich our understanding of how to approach such issues from the perspective of those

who look to the biblical text for guidance for our own lives and the church today. ■

Many little incidents in Christ's life show the man of careful domestic habits. He was in all things methodological and frugal. The miraculous power he possessed never was used to surround him with any profusion. He would have the fragments of the feast picked up and stored in the baskets, “that nothing should be lost.” His illustrations show the habits of a frugal home. His parable of the kingdom of heaven, likened to the leaven hidden in three measures of meal, gives us to believe that doubtless he had often watched his mother in the homely process of bread making.

—Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Footsteps of the Master*

Nancy Calvert-Koyzis is co-author, along with Heather E. Weir, of *Breaking Boundaries: Female Biblical Interpreters who Challenged the Status Quo (2010)* and *Strangely Familiar: Protofeminist Interpretations of Patriarchal Biblical Texts*.

From the Moderator

Fear of Running Out

USE YOURSELF UP! BY HERB GALE

It may surprise you that generosity is one of the nine fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22. If you're like me, you remember the list as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness" and then you kind of stumble a bit and then remember, "self-control ... and, oh yeah, I think goodness is in there somewhere." And it is! But the Greek word usually translated as goodness in the King James version and in our own *Living Faith* can just as well be translated as "generosity," which is how it is translated in the New Revised Standard version. And I think this is really a better translation. For the kind of "goodness" that Paul talks about in his letter to the Galatians has less to do with moral rectitude and more to do with effective functionality.

I remember years ago receiving a candle as a Christmas present. The candle came to have deep sentimental value for me, for it was given to celebrate the first Christmas after I was ordained, and the time when my mother was dying of cancer. It was moulded into the shape of a picturesque church building with a tall steeple, arched windows on each side and a wick on the top of the roof. The wax church was painted as if it were decorated for Christmas, and I would put the candle out each Christmas season and place it in some prominent place in my home. But I would never light it. I wanted to preserve my candle as a beautiful Christmas decoration and a sacred memory.

Then one Sunday, on impulse, I

took the candle with me to worship as an object lesson for the children during Advent. Showing them my candle, I told them how beautiful I thought it was and how much I treasured it. I told them how I had had the candle for years and how I pulled it out each Christmas. Then I shared with them my dilemma. "Should I light the candle or not?" I asked. If I light the candle, the wax church would slowly disappear as fuel for the flame. If I didn't light it, the candle would remain just as it was when I first received it, but it would never glow with a warm and attractive light. "What should I do?" I asked as I held the candle in one hand and a box of matches in the other. "I will do whatever you decide."

The children discussed the decision with one another and then they quickly decided. It was unanimous. I should light the candle. After all, that's what candles are for! "Light it!" they shouted with delight, eager to see the candle burn. Then with a measure of grief and excitement, I struck the match and lit the wick. And soon my little wax church was glowing brightly. Placing the burning candle on the communion table, I led the children in prayer as my candle church continued to burn and share its light throughout the rest of the service.

I am reminded of the words of one elderly woman known in her community as a large and generous soul. "What is your secret for abundant living?" one person asked her. "It's simple," she replied. "Don't be afraid to use yourself up!"



A bus stop in Brandon, Man.

As I think about it, I think that the greatest fear of the Presbyterian Church today is that we are afraid that we are "running out"—running out of time, running out of money, running out of ideas, running out of leaders, running out of energy, running out of young people ... you know, running out. But the good news of the gospel is that God's endless supply of grace never runs out and that Christ has promised he will never run out on us. "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you," he promised his frightened disciples the night before his arrest and crucifixion. (John 14:18) And Christ kept his promise even as he keeps all his promises. Indeed, he is with us today as our resurrected Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us and among us. ■

Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving for the PCC. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca

St. Andrew's, Fredericton

A family that prays together goes to session meetings together! It may not be a familiar phrase to most, but being an elder is a tradition for a family at St. Andrew's: Arthur Henderson is grandfather to Andrew Speight, and father to Jeanne Kaye Speight, who is also Andrew's mom. Arthur's father and grandfather were also elders. Now that's a family affair!



Coquitlam, B.C.

Canadians spend \$35 billion annually on Christmas. It would take less than half that amount to provide clean drinking water to everyone on earth. Coquitlam did the math. They decided to direct a little of their Christmas money to building a well through PWS&D. That little portion was nearly \$25,000; enough to drill three wells to provide clean drinking water for 900 people. Here, members of the Love Well Committee and Kids Church present Rev. Graeme Illman with a cheque. Now that's the spirit of Christmas and the true meaning of the Holy Birth.

*Rockwood Presbyterian
Rockwood, Ontario*



Some beautiful flower petals nourished with God's love in His garden. We remember the past faith of our forefathers who gave us a foundation to build on. Today, in faith, we worship joyfully as we strive to follow God's words and commandments. We look to the future with love, faith, joy, friendship and hope that God's work will continue to be done in this church.

Sue M.

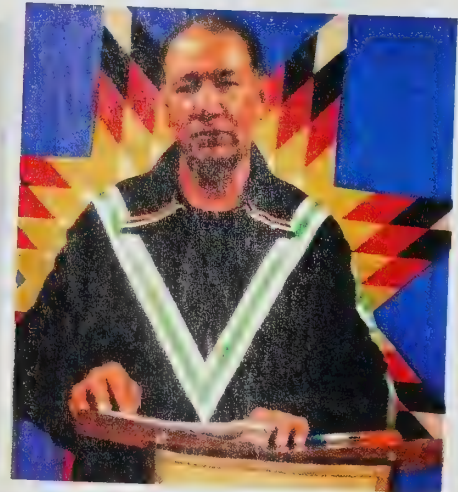
St. Andrew's, Beamsville, Ont.

Rev. Robert Wilson joined the two-point charge of St. Andrew's, Beamsville, and Smithville in January. Before his previous two-point charge outside London, and before graduating from Presbyterian College, Montreal, Wilson spent three decades in the Canadian Navy. He welcomes new parishioners to both charges. From left: Rev. Pearl Vasarhelyi, interim moderator; Wilson; Rev. Barb McGale, guest speaker; and, Bob Bosch, moderator of the Niagara presbytery.



WICM

John Constant, a third-year student at Vancouver School of Theology, was pulpit supply for Rev. Margaret Mullin at the Winnipeg Inner City Mission last November. He plans to continue his Master of Divinity program and let the Creator direct his path.



Knox, Alliston, Ont.

The grades four to seven students at Knox have been studying peace. From Matthew 5:9 they learned "we are to make peace." From the *Record* they learned, "Education is the greatest tool against the erasures of war." They held a fundraiser lunch in February, which raised \$437.05, enough to send four girls in Afghanistan to school for one year. That's youth setting examples for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

online extra

ON OUR WEBSITE: Two grandkids' stories: Rebecca joins her grandma in the choir loft at Erindale, Mississauga, Ont.; and, Cyrus of Sutherland's River, N.S. is baptized making him the fifth generation in his family.



Athelstan, Que.

Four stewards at Athelstan, in the St. Lawrence Valley of Quebec, were surprised with plaques at the annual meeting for their combined 339 years of service. From left: Lynn McIntyre—35 years a manager, 14 years elder, 23 years secretary and treasurer. Robert Arthur—35 years as manager. Margaret Atcheson, current chair of board of managers. Donald Grant—57 years as manager, 49 years as elder, 31 years as clerk of session. Peter Tully—58 years as manager, 37 years as elder. That's generosity!

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 Whycocomagh, N.S., Little Narrows and St. Andrew's; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Murdock MacRae, 8 Armstrong Cres., North Sydney, NS B2A 3R9; 902-794-7992; murdock.macrae@ns.sympatico.ca.

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Manotick, Ont., Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Cedric Pettigrew, 340 Claridge Dr., Ottawa, ON K2J 5C2; 613-843-1446; cedric.pettigrew@sympatico.ca.
 Montreal, Que., Chambit; Full-time bilingual Korean English ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Greg Davidson; 514-695-1879; gregory@briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca.
 Ottawa, Ont., St. Andrew's; Director of Christian Development; Interim Moderator Rev. William Ball, c/o Westminster Presbyterian Church, 470 Roosevelt Ave., Ottawa, ON K2A 1Z6; 613-722-1144;

wball@mywestminster.ca.

Ottawa, Ont., St. Stephen's; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. MacArthur Shields; 145 Pineridge Rd., Carp, ON K0A 1L0; 613-839-2135; turtletoft@gmail.com.

Pembroke, Ont., First; Full-time; Bill Pearson, Convener Search Committee, 491 Angus Campbell Dr., Pembroke, ON K8A 8K7; 613-732-1885; bpearson62@sympatico.ca.

Winchester, Ont., St. Paul's; Chesterville, St. Andrew's; Morewood; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Jim Ferrier, PO Box 131, Maxville, ON K0C 1T0; 613-538-2582; jim_olga@sympatico.ca.

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Cambridge, St. Andrew's (Hespeler); Interim Moderator Mark B. Gaskin; 130 Victoria Ave., Cambridge, ON N1S 1Y2; 519-621-3630; standrewssearch@golden.net.

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Harriston, Knox-Calvin; Interim Moderator Rev. Nan St. Louis, 166 Birmingham St. E., Mount Forest, ON N0G 2L2; 519-323-3839; nanstlouis1@sympatico.ca.

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Scarborough, St. David's; Interim Moderator Rev. J. P. Ian Morrison, 17 Earswick Dr., Scarborough, ON M1E 1C7; 416-265-0135; ian.morrison@bellnet.ca.

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ksteeper@elmwoodchurch.ca.
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Ilderton, Bethel; Part-time; Carl Crossett, Convener of Search Committee, 14846 Fifteen Mile Rd., RR 2, Denfield, ON N0M 1P0; 519-225-2733; ccrossett@quadro.net.

London, Oakridge; Lead minister; Rev. Kirk Summers, 970 Oxford St. W., London, ON N6H 1V4; 519-719-6590; summers@quadro.net.

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St. Thomas, Knox; Rev. Andrew Reid, New St. James Presbyterian Church, 280 Oxford St. E., London, ON N6A 1V4; 519-434-1127; areid@newstjames.com.

Teeswater, Knox and Kinlough; Interim Moderator Rev. Michael Rundle, 563 11th St., Hanover, ON N4N 1T4; 519-364-1622; michaelrundle_@hotmail.com.

Warton, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Alan Barr, PO Box 86, Chatsworth, ON N0H 1G0; 519-794-4175.

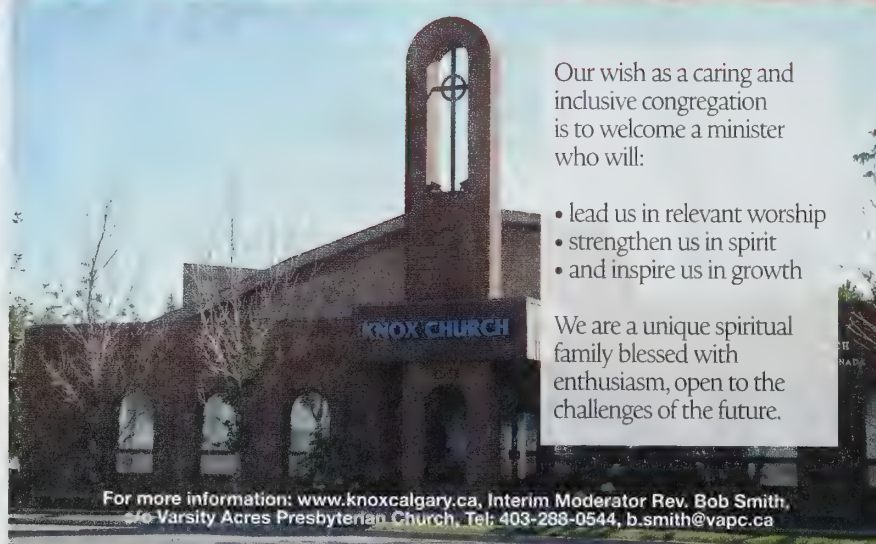
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Obituaries

Billett, Jean, A.R.C.T., R.M.T., passed away Jan. 6, 2011 in her 89th year. She is survived by her husband of 62 years, Dr. Keith Billett and their children Jerome, Stephen and Mary; her six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Jean started her music ministry at St. Andrew's, Bowmanville, Ont., in 1990 and served as organist and choir director until her retirement in June 2001. Jean was also a faithful member of the Women's Missionary Society and the Craft Group. A faithful member and servant of the Lord who is greatly missed.

Dobie, Rev. Dr. George Edgar, Jan. 6, 1919 to March 5, 2011. Born in Port Arthur (Thunder Bay, Ont.), educated at Queens, Princeton (M.Th.) and awarded an Honorary Doctor of Divinity from Presbyterian College, McGill. He was

ordained in 1945 and had charges in Indian Head, Sask., Ft. St. John, B.C., Saskatoon, Sask. (superintendent of missions), Garden Village Church, Burnaby, B.C., Knox, Red Deer, Alta., St. Timothy's, Ottawa, Ont., and Knox, Woodstock, Ont. Following retirement, Dr. Dobie and his wife, Helen moved to Kelowna, B.C.

He passed away with loving family around him at Hospice House in Kelowna. Survived by his wife, Helen, their six children and their families.

MacIntyre, Gordon Ross, a life-long member of St. Luke's-Knox, Finch, Ont., on Wednesday, August 25, 2010 in his 85th year. Faithful elder, and chairman of the board of trustees, also formerly served on the board of managers. Beloved husband of Norma; father of Ian and wife, Janet, Cheryl and husband, Ian; grandfather of Chelsea, Jessica, Andrew, Hiliary and Stuart. ■

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We're growing up!

Called to Wonder is 10 years old ...
so we're going

online!



A big thanks to Emma (age 8), one of our readers from Tecumseh, Ont., for writing to us and asking for some help with...

"getting along with older or younger siblings"

Visit www.presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder as we explore this hot topic together featuring...

MAY 7

- When your house is a warzone
- How to encourage peace

MAY 21

- Taming the Tattletale
- What does the Bible say about sibling rivalry?



IN THE MEANTIME, CHECK OUT:

www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/home_family/sibling_rivalry.html

"What is Sibling Rivalry?"

"Saying Sorry"

"Training your Temper"

Next month, go online with us as we explore **BULLYING!**
SUBMIT your questions, comments and thoughts (like Emma did!) at presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder

I have had quite a few wild rides since Jesus burst upon my life in the dawning of my third decade

For the Journey, continued from page 50

a dead run and an outright rodeo routine. I didn't know whether to pull all the leather I could and try to hang in there for the consummation of the obvious, or whether I should let go of everything, including my pride, and bail out. One thing for sure, I was no longer cutting quite a figure for the good-looking daughters; I was struggling to simply stay on the wild ride.

Thanks to the good-looking daughters, who managed to get their mounts on either side of the stud, pinch him into control and prop me up in the saddle, I survived the wild ride.

Looking back on that scene, it's more than just a story to tell my grandson. For me, now enjoying the pleasures of old-timer's disease and not having my long term memories cluttered up with much in the way of short-term memory anymore, it is a vivid recollection that serves as a metaphor for much of my life in the fellowship of Christ's church. I have had quite a few wild rides since Jesus burst upon my life in the dawning of my third decade.

Some I have tried to ride out on my own and fallen flat on my prat. Others I have tried to ride out on my own and succeeded, with considerable satisfaction too, I might add. And then there have been others that have profoundly been too much for me, and I have been quickly and absolutely overwhelmed. One such experience was very early in my life in the church as well as in my experience in ministry.

About four years after being baptized, still very wet behind the ears and filled with religious enthusiasm if not foolishness, I found myself moving with Linda and our two small boys to a small rural church in the Fraser



Valley of British Columbia. Bradner was the name of the community and the church, and I was to be its pastor while I was working on the necessary education to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church.

Looking back, much of the education could hardly be deemed necessary, including the three month "total immersion" class in Hebrew that the hallowed halls of academia had decided would be a real cool way to deliver their Hebrew course. Every moment of our time at the school, every bit of instruction and conversation, was to be in Hebrew. This empty-headed scheme, one that only a room full of PhDs could possibly have thought up, quickly threatened to throw the single students with few other commitments in their lives. Many of the students were married with children and the scheme completely pitched them to the earth. I was the only one in my year serving a church as a pastor while studying full time, a church that had blossomed into a full-time job within a year of Linda and I arriving on the scene. I tried to buckle up and ride it out. I think I made it a couple of weeks.

After worship, about the second

Sunday into the seminary's attempt to ride us into the dirt, a young elder took Linda aside and asked if there was something wrong with her husband. I'm still not sure what he saw and I would love to know what Linda told him, but I remember clearly what happened as a result. I received a phone call that afternoon advising me I was fired with full pay for the next three months. I could come to church on Sundays with my family if I wanted to but beyond that I wasn't allowed

to even think about it. For the next three months we were a kept family. If memory serves, even the laundry was done for us.

Three months later, I rode out of the final Hebrew exam with my head up and my heels down. Thankfully, I managed to forget almost everything of that 'seminal' experience within about as many months. One thing I will never forget though is my experience of Christ's church cowboying up and riding with me, with us. It's one of several experiences that have left me with the impression that there really is a third sacrament in Christ's church: the sacrament of care. Is this what Jesus was getting at when he took off his clothes, dawned servants' garb and washed his disciples' dusty feet? Is this what he was teaching when he concluded with the words: "I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you." (John 13:15) ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



Cowboy Up

CARING FOR OTHERS DURING A WILD RIDE.

BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

DAD AND I had been invited up to Brisco, B.C., about 100 miles north of where we lived in the Rocky Mountain Trench. Dad had a friend there who had a ranch, a herd of good horses, a couple of good-looking daughters and a boy about my own age of 12. We arrived in the morning. The good-looking daughters and the boy soon had me mounted on a beautiful Arabian stallion. Before I knew it we were all heading out for a ride down the gravel road that bordered the ranch.

The stallion was way more horse than I had ever handled before, but the good-looking daughters inspired me to be brave. I was cutting quite a figure as we rode along, the stallion doing his thing, sidestepping, prancing, tail switching, neck arched and nostrils flared. Things were turning out just about the way I had planned them, if I had

planned them at all, when a woeful whinny wafted on the wind from across the field of a neighbouring ranch that we happened to be skirting at the time.

It turned out there was more than whinny wafting in the wind that morning. The plaintive sound was generated by the neighbour's quarter horse mare who was in the middle of a rampaging heat. As the love notes of the whinny wafted into the ears of my mount, the rampaging heat wafted up his nose. Instantly there was a lot more sidestepping and prancing going on followed by some enthusiastic crow-hopping and sun-fishing.

Now I was really cutting quite a cowboy figure for the good-looking daughters. And then, both the Arab stud and I lost control. He took the bit in his teeth, shifted into high gear and lit out in something crossed between

continued on page 49



Benediction

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. — 1 Timothy 4:12

SEE PG. 11 FOR A HISTORY OF THESE YOUTH FROM TRAFALGAR, OAKVILLE, ONT.

A woman with reddish-brown hair is looking down at a magazine held by two young children. The children, a girl with a blue bow and a boy, are both looking at the magazine with interest. The magazine is open, showing a page with the title 'Record Recognized for Excellence' and another page with a large image and the word 'RECORD' in large letters.

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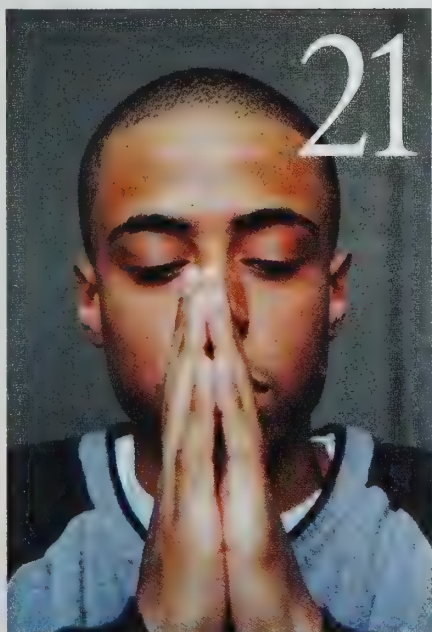
PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

JUNE 2011



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FOUR WAYS TO LOOK AT FAITH.



On the Cover: photo illustration by
Nika Fadul/Getty Images



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A Matter of Perspective

DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS LEAD TO DIFFERENT THEOLOGIES.
TRUTH AND SCRIPTURE ARE PRESENT IN BOTH. BY DAVID HARRIS

If you've been following some of the theological articles in the *Record* over the past several years, you'll have noticed that Christianity seems to be reforming into two overarching worldviews.

One worldview frames life's big questions—the ones referred to in our cover story—from the perspective of what one ought to do: what is the right action in any given circumstance.

This group tends to be concerned with morals. Its members see the world and the choices we face in sharp contrast: more right and wrong than contextual. Requiring people to take a stand on issues. Perhaps we can even venture to say they are more generally anxious about life and worried that people will be misled by wrong-headed teaching.

The second overarching approach focuses on discerning how to be good, making community and relationships paramount. Instead of seeking proper decisions in a book—even a holy book—practical decisions will emerge. Scripture is read more thematically, in a sweeping style, and the historical context of a particular passage is of crucial importance in interpretation.

If we step back and review the letters to the editor in this magazine over the same period, we generally find the debates in the church and religion framed in terms of conservative and liberal.

Each side thinks the other is at best misguided, perhaps even profoundly wrong and misinterprets scripture. There tends to be a fair bit of each side yelling at the other.

But what if we could lay these dis-



What if we are able to agree that the other side is not wrong, but is merely looking at the world through a different set of lenses

tinctions aside? What if we are able to agree that the other side is not wrong, but is merely looking at the world through a completely different set of lenses and bringing a completely different set of concerns?

I once worked at a publication where all my colleagues were anxious to get their work done early, to make a decision about a story or page layout and that would be it. No changes.

I, on the other hand, was always tinkering with stories and layouts. I had at best a modest respect for the deadline until I absolutely had to make a final decision.

My colleagues thought I was being mean in undoing their good work and in creating avoidable stress for them at deadline. I saw them as uncooperative. Eventually, we brought in a mediator who helped us see that no one was being mean or uncooperative, but that we were bringing different values to the same problem.

Once we recognized our different

styles, we were able to work out our differences harmoniously.

Is it possible, I wonder, if we could do the same thing in the faith arena? Instead of demonizing the other side, we might agree that everyone is trying to conform to God's will, just in different ways, and so with different outcomes.

Take the gospels themselves as an example. One might characterize the synoptic writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke) as being more generally concerned with Jesus the man; the Messiah who will lead his people like the prophets of old into a new age. The emphasis is on the Man-God.

John, on the other hand, is concerned more about presenting Jesus as divine: the God-Man. "And the Word was made flesh"

Both are true, but profoundly different. So too are these two overarching worldviews that are concerned with thinking about our faith. They are both firmly grounded in scripture, but see faith's role in our lives in profoundly different ways. The practical concern about morals is grounded in the question: What is the right thing to do? The other perspective asks: What is it good to be?

If there is any truth to this argument, perhaps it can also lead to a more amicable discussion, one that honours where the other side is coming from, not as opposed to one's own position, but rather as looking at faith and life from just a very different perspective. ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.6, JUNE 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

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ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634

Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.

Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government
of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF)
for our publishing activities.

Subscription rates. GST/HST not included.

Every Home Plan: \$19.50

Individual: \$29.50

U.S.A. and foreign: \$39 **Single copies:** \$3.95

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by
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Address all correspondence and changes of address
(include label from magazine) to:

Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Phone: (416) 441-1111; 1-800-619-7301

Fax: (416) 441-2825

E-mail: circulation@presbyterianrecord.ca

Web site: www.presbyterianrecord.ca

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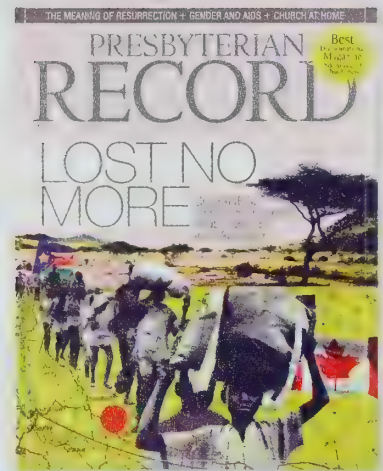
Re Prayer and Great Things!, February

As I read this article I was troubled by the implicit argument that if we pray more, and more faithfully, God will do great things for our church.

Is there another way of thinking about praying for our denomination? Three things stand out for me in the gospels in this regard. First, the disciples had to unlearn a lot about their preconceptions of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God. Peter's confession (Mark 8:27-31) indicates that this unlearning was far from complete as Jesus equates Peter's bravado with the talk of the devil. Are there not a lot of things we may have to unlearn about being the church in this present age? Is a powerful and successful church really what God wants?

Secondly, we are told that Jesus spent a lot of time in prayer. Prayer is a time to be aware of our temptations—and surely success, power and privilege are among the promises of the evil one. As well, Jesus clearly sought discernment through prayer as the Gethsemane passages indicate. Too often we skip over the existential

Letters



write to us

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crisis of the death of Jesus by giving it a (too quick) theological interpretation that makes it less horrible than it really was. But we must all consider what it might mean if in our prayer we discern that God wills the cross! What would dying mean for our denomination, allowing as we must for the hope of resurrection?

And finally, the disciples asked that Jesus would teach them how to pray. Calvin Brown is right in saying ➤

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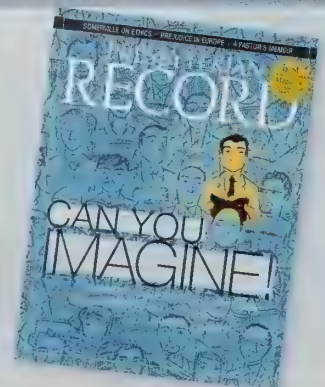
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Pontius' Puddle



that first we must establish a relationship with God; but how? Perhaps we Presbyterians also need to be taught how to pray. Before we rise to the summit of prayer we need first to be led through the valley of unlearning, emptying and dying to all that is distracting us. Why not turn to those who have developed a discipline of prayer over many centuries, such as various orders within the Roman Catholic Church, to help us learn what we need to know?

I agree that our church must change and prayer is an integral part—but it is not simply a question of more and richer. Prayer may also be a matter of less and poorer.

GLENN INGLIS, MALAWI

Was a Useful Purpose Served?

Re Minister Suspended, April

As a long-time subscriber to the *Record*, I was extremely disappointed to find this article and the editorial, A Probabilities Test. I believe this coverage smacks of secular rather than Christian journalism.

In your editorial, you state your responsibility to help church administration and courts, "be as transparent as possible to the wider church." How do you reconcile the function of session as a closed court, wherein highly sensitive issues are discussed with love and compassion, with the *Record's* decision to publish this article, whatever the facts may be, so extensively? What useful purpose is served? Of course, allegations must be investigated but could not the findings remain confidential so that the family does not suffer from undue publicity

in the midst of inconclusive results? And, for any readers who judge without proof, remember the words of Jesus "... cast the first stone."

HELEN HOLMES, ONLINE

The editor and managing editor have responded to various letters online, where a heated forum did occur at the end of the cited article and the April editorial. We invite you to visit these dialogues and add to them as you may please.

Appreciated Columnists

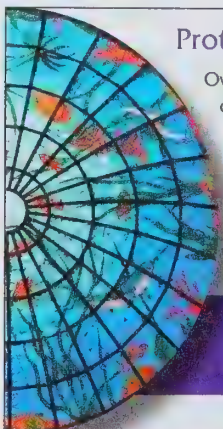
Thank you for the Progressive Lectionary by Laurence DeWolfe. I always enjoy reading these thoughtful articles for his no nonsense, concrete way of making complex theological ideas accessible. I particularly enjoyed April's Watch and See. His Easter words—"We watch and see that God is not defeated, and we are not lost, even though all seems lost. For a time."—resonated with me, and helped me get my own life in perspective. I know I am not lost. I do see God at work around me and sometimes even in me. Hallelujah!

DONNA DRAPKIN, PENETANGUISHENE, ONT.

I enjoy, understand and appreciate all of David Webber's contributions. Thanks, David.

GARY NAYLOR, VICTORIA WEST, P.E.I.

You both keep good company: Dr. DeWolfe received an award of excellence from the



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Canadian Church Press for his 2010 column, *Easter in Epiphany?* (February 2010), and Rev. Webber an award of excellence for *Who's Driving the Truck?* (July 2010) from the Associated Church Press.

Embarrassed by Kairos

I am embarrassed that the Presbyterian Church is even associated with Kairos. Full marks to the Conservative government and Prime Minister Harper for defunding these extremist activists who've hijacked the Christian community in order to further their political agenda. Kairos is about promoting their brand of politics, not about helping the poor and needy. If more members of the Presbyterian Church were to sit up and take notice, I sincerely believe they would choose not to apportion any of their offerings to such a group. Sadly, I am reconsidering my involvement with, and attendance in, the Presbyterian Church due to this issue.

CHERYL, ONLINE

Stephen Allen, associate secretary for Justice Ministries, responds:

Kairos' partners most certainly include the poor. The Sudan Council of Churches helps people in Southern Sudan build foundations for peace, in a region wracked by conflict for decades. Support from Kairos to the Heirs of Justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo has involved helping the victims of rape and sexual violence.

Jesus fed the hungry. He cured the ill and the lame. Jesus also said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:9-10)

Stephen Allen represents the Presbyterian Church in Canada on Kairos' board of directors. This is an edited version of his substantive response, which is available in full on our website.

Correction:

Re College Convocations, April

In announcing the May convocations at the church's three colleges, we misspoke regarding one. St. Andrew's Hall does not have convocation. The Vancouver School of Theology, of which St. Andrew's Hall is a member, does the teaching, grants the degrees and holds convocation.

We regret this error and any embarrassment it might have caused.

The relationship between St. Andrew's Hall and VST seems complicated at a distance, but it is also intricate and rich and provides a diversity of experiences for the students. ■

online extra

LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED SO MORE VOICES CAN BE SHARED. THE COMPLETE TEXT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE:

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Leading From Subtext

THE *RECORD* TELLS STORIES. THE REST IS UP TO THE CHURCH.

BY ANDREW FAIZ



We published an article in the April issue which involved a daughter accusing her father of incest. The offence occurred before he was a minister. She has not pursued the accusation in a criminal court. We reported the decision of a church court, the issues behind the decision, the process taken by the presbytery involved and we spoke to the main parties involved in the process and by the decision. Solid journalism. Not surprising, given the sensational subject matter, the article has caused a lot of buzz, some of which you can read by following the article thread online. Including some shooting from the lip by me.

We at the *Record* hoped readers would be able to unpack the subtext of the story and act appropriately within their churches and presbyteries. So, here is some of that subtext made overt:

The first obvious question is: Are the courts of the Presbyterian Church capable of taking on such a case? Sexual harassment cases are particularly sensitive to interpersonal dynamics. Our civic judicial system has the accused and the accuser face each other, ask each other questions via a lawyer, and present expert testimony in the company of people who aren't related to either party.

Our article showed how the presbytery did a good job of seeking balanced testimony and educating itself on the complicated dynamics of sexual harassment accusations. But the issue of cross-examination and personal relationships still hangs in the air.

Many online commentators ask where the redemption and reconciliation exists in the article. Good question, wrong focus: Is there room for reconciliation in our polity? If—let us

argue—we are the wrong court for this sort of case, then we should be the right court for reconciliation. Is there room in our system for that? Should there be? Instead of determining fault, could the court have attempted to bring heal-

MANY ONLINE
COMMENTATORS
ASK WHERE THE
REDEMPTION AND
RECONCILIATION
EXISTS IN THE ARTICLE.
GOOD QUESTION,
WRONG FOCUS

ing to a family in pain? Does it have that permission or direction in the available polity? Is this a polity issue? Or a cultural one?

Other denominations that have inherited our polity have rewritten it to embrace healing and reconciliation as the primary focus. Is this a direction we should seek in our own church?

Some of the other accusations online are about in camera sessions and confidential reports. We reported the results of an in camera meeting. That's fine. We also reported a little

about the voting process of that meeting. If you follow the online comments closely you'll note one person also mentions the close in camera vote. In other words, that result was an open secret.

However, we felt it important to add that detail because it highlighted some of the issues I've already noted above. Interpersonal relationships, clarity, process ... But ... but, should the court have been in camera? Again, was this the right court to do the right thing?

In camera meetings are used by corporate boards to discuss executive personnel issues; and many boards have a process for moving in camera minutes to public minutes. Transparency is most important.

And, yes, we did quote from a confidential document. If you're following my logic, you'll recognize I question whether the document should have been confidential. But, it was leaked to us and in reading it we were able to determine the thoroughness of the presbytery's process. Still the question hangs: Should an open accusation made in an open court lead to confidential reports and in camera process?

The *Record* should be the place where the Presbyterian Church holds open conversations. Right, Left, East, West, Small Big, Right, Wrong—shouldn't matter. In these pages we share our success stories and our struggles, discuss our challenges and our failures. But leadership belongs to our presbyters and to the courts and committees to which they have open access.

Our perpetual hope is that the conversation we oversee will encourage your Church's leadership. ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor.

U.S. Presbyterians to Allow Ordination of Homosexuals

ORDINATIONS REMAIN AT THE DISCRETION OF PRESBYTERIES AND GOVERNING BODIES. BY CONNIE PURVIS

THE MAJORITY of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s 173 presbyteries have backed a change to the church's constitution that will allow willing presbyteries and governing bodies to ordain openly gay men and lesbian women as elders, deacons and ministers. It takes effect July 10, one year after the adjournment of the PC(USA)'s 2010 General Assembly.

The change, dubbed "Amendment 10-A," removes "fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness" as an ordination requirement, and replaces a portion of the church's *Book of Order* with new language.

Realizing the controversial move could create divisions in the denomination, 24 former moderators of the General Assembly wrote a letter to churches in the wake of the amendment's ratification on May 11.

"The decision to adopt Amendment 10-A does not bind the conscience of any Presbyterian, nor does it create a mandate for ordaining particular individuals," they wrote. "Instead it directs each congregation and presbytery to prayerfully discern the gifts and call of each candidate for ordination, guided by scripture and the confessions."

Power over ordinations will remain with presbyteries and governing bodies, which will decide whom to ordain within their bounds.

Although not all presbyteries had voted by press time, the unofficial tally stood at 87-62 on May 11.

This was the fourth time pres-



Tricia Dykers Koenig and Michelle Ready, observers at the PC(USA)'s 2010 General Assembly, smile as the church votes to relax a ban on the ordination of homosexuals.

byteries voted on amendments to the fidelity or chastity requirement, which was added following the 1996 assembly. In previous years, presbyteries upheld the requirement with an increasingly slim margin.

The new language of Amendment 10-A says standards for ordination "reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life," and stresses the responsibility of the ordaining body to determine "a candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all the requirements ... for ordination and installation."

The Presbyterian Church in Canada endorses candidates for ordination

who are celibate unless in a marriage between a man and a woman. As reiterated in the report of a General Assembly special committee on sexual orientation in 2003, "a celibate homosexual minister or member of the Order of Diaconal Ministries may still be ordained/designated under the present laws and practice of the Presbyterian Church in Canada," but "on the basis of a precedent derived from an understanding of scriptural authority, a person described as a 'self avowed and practicing homosexual' may be refused ordination." ■

Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.

Community News

Bicentennial in Brockville

IN THE EARLY 1800s, Rev. William Smart, an itinerant preacher with a Bible in his saddlebag, spread the word of God in communities scattered along the bank of the St. Lawrence River. His work would lead to the first recorded "Sabbath school" in Brockville, Ont., and the birth of a congregation.

Two hundred years and three buildings later, First is spending a year celebrating its heritage and enduring witness, bolstered by a \$3,800 grant from the Government of Canada's heritage department.

The year features concerts and local artists, historical Sundays, as well as a Sunday with the Empire Loyalists and a visit from former prime minister John A. Macdonald (thanks to a local impersonator). They will also honour the memory of Rev. William Smart with a summer graveside service.

But for Rev. Doug Johns, First's minister, the celebration is a way of looking back in order to look forward.

"We're recognizing that the past isn't somewhere we want to go back to, but something that we can build on." ■ —C.Purvis

New Staff at National Offices

REV. IAN MCDONALD will be taking the helm of the amalgamated Canada Ministries/The Vine department at national offices on Sept. 1.

The Halifax native currently serves at Calvin, Toronto, and previously spent two years heading Christian education at First, Chatham, Ont. He was also influenced by his time at Camp Geddie, N.S.

"This is an exciting ministry and I am eager to begin the work and to nurture collaborative relationships with people across the church. Hearing from congregations and presbyter-

ies about their situations is a priority," McDonald told the *Record*. ■ —C.Purvis

Faris Leaves Council

"A LOT OF MY TIME has been working out revisioning and restructuring," said

Rev. Dr. Bob Faris, who left his post as director of the Churches' Council on Theological Education in May. "There were some attempts at that in the mid-90s, and there was a sense that the CCTE had lost direction."



Record Wins Awards

The *Record* picked up a total of 15 awards at the joint convention of the Associated and Canadian Church Press held in Chicago in April. The magazine's writing and design were both recognized for excellence. Art director Caroline Bishop received two firsts for her work: one for the layout and design of the September 2010 edition, and another for the layout and design of the Malawi feature, which showcased the photographs of staff writer, Connie Purvis. Bishop received a second place award for the cover of the October issue.

Artist Michelle Thompson was given a first for her original artwork that accompanied the Global Christianity story in the July/August issue. Other firsts included Laurence DeWolfe for Easter in Epiphany? (February), David Webber for Who's Driving the Truck? (July/August), and Elizabeth Albrecht-Bisset for her narrative, Goldilocks Goes to Church (July/August). That story also earned a third place for written humour.

Second place awards were given to the anonymous piece, This Is My Beloved Son ... (December), for editorial courage; and the Theology 101 series was awarded in the department category.

Third places were given to senior writer, Amy MacLachlan for her news story, Churches Fuming Over Anti-Semitism Claim (February); and to *Record* editors for the Letters section.

Editor David Harris received a third for his editorial, Populist Thuggery in the March issue, and managing editor, Andrew Faiz earned a second place for his column, Pop Christianity.

The *Record* placed third for Best in Class, denominational magazine. ■ —AM

Faris joined the CCTE in 2004, but was recently called to St. Andrew's, Toronto, to become the downtown church's associate minister. During his years at the Council, he has watched the ecumenical body re-shape and re-invent itself.

The predecessor to today's CCTE was born in 1969 when six founding churches created the Consultative Committee on Theological Education, which aimed to find ways of doing theological education collaboratively.

In 1990, the Consultative Committee and the Ecumenical Foundation established by the United Church's Henry Vaughn came together to become the Churches' Council on Theological Education. Following a visioning process from 2006 to 2008, the organization shifted its focus to providing two annual conferences: one for theological students and the other for those interested in theological education in Canada.

"It took a long time for us to come to that decision and follow that path, but I think there's an interest," Faris said. "In a sense it's going back to the kind of consultative work that was done in the 1960s with the six member churches, but expanding their table."

For more information about upcoming conferences, visit ccteconference.ca. ■ —C.Purvis

A Future "Green" Parking Lot

A PIECE OF PROPERTY adjacent to Mimico Presbyterian, Ont.—which was sold to become a hydro substation in 1940—came home on Jan. 27. The newly purchased land was commissioned at a service on May 1.

To keep the space versatile, the church plans to create a "green" parking area that would add an additional 60 parking spaces to its current 25-car lot. The plan calls for a plastic grid to be placed across the area and then grass planted on top, creating a dual-purpose parking lot and yard.

"We made a list of ideas [of what we could do with the land]," explained Pastor Rob Howard, lay missionary at Mimico. "Then we applied financial pressures and the list got a lot shorter. We wanted to do something that would be useful now, but wouldn't tie our hands so we can do something different in the future."

The dedication day featured guest speaker Dr. Mark Durieux, a pioneer of social entrepreneurship and a Presbyterian World Service and Development committee member, and included entertainment and balloon animals by a local children's entertainer, and a congregational lunch.

■ —C.Purvis ➤



Barb Wallace (centre), chair of the Mimico board of managers, Pastor Rob Howard (left), guest speaker Dr. Mark Durieux (right) and the Mimico congregation on their new property.

BUILDING HOPE



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Crieff Hills staff, members of the Maclean Estate Committee, and the PCC's moderator cut the ribbon at the official grand opening of The Pines, which was built thanks to donations.

Vancouver Helps Refugees

"I FEEL REALLY GOOD about the way this came about," said Rev. Sylvia Cleland, whose church joined an ecumenical coalition to sponsor a family of Palestinian refugees to the Vancouver area.

The request for help originated from a United Church minister, and was passed on by Janette McIntosh, a Kairos representative for the B.C. synod and an elder at West Point Grey Presbyterian; Cleland, in turn, relayed it to other Presbyterian churches and her associates in the ministerial association. It resulted in the birth of a refugee sponsorship group made up of representatives from congregations that have committed to financial and social support for the family of five.

At their annual general meeting, West Point Grey members agreed to contribute \$400 per month for one year, but have already exceeded the \$4,800 required.

The Palestinian family fled Israel in 1948 during the Arab-Israeli War. They settled in Bagdad, but when they faced accusations of collaboration under Saddam Hussein's regime, they left Iraq for Al Hol refugee camp in Syria. The United Nations is now working to close the camp and the remaining refugees must be relocated.

At press time, the churches hoped the family would arrive by the end of May and reunite with relatives in the Burnaby area. ■—C.Purvis

The Pines Opens at Crieff

THE PINES—a brand new building at Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre featuring cozy personal suites and a

common area for day visitors—officially opened on May 14 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and special events.

The Pines will enable more visitors to "enjoy God's sanctuary at Crieff," said David Phillips, convener of the Maclean Estate Committee, which oversees the retreat centre.

The day also featured bird banding demonstrations, guided hikes, and a ropes course.

Rooms at the Pines feature private patios overlooking a wooded ravine, fully operational kitchens, living areas, a queen or two single beds, private washrooms, and wireless internet.

Marylou Pentelow, coordinator of programs, volunteers and marketing, said the building's design should satisfy common requests for more privacy, and for "quality but not luxury." She hopes the suites will appeal to ministers on study leave, business people needing time to work and relax, or for anyone wishing to spend time in a quiet, rural setting.

Phase Two of the project is currently on hold until donations increase. The first phase carried a price tag of \$600,000, and \$460,000 was raised.

Visit crieffhills.com for rates at the Pines. ■—AM

Moose on a Mission

ST. DAVID'S, ST. JOHN'S, raised over \$3,600 for a mission to South Sudan with some help from an antlered Canadian icon. The church hosted a fundraising dinner featuring moose meat.

The funds will help John Chol, a member of St. David's and a native of the newly-born nation of South Sudan, during a trip to his homeland. He plans to visit refugee camps in Ethiopia and remote villages in the state of Jonglei, South Sudan, visit family and friends, and bring clothes, supplies, and Bibles for the churches in his hometown.

Two cheques were presented to Chol on April 3: one from the Atlantic Mission Society and one from the church's session. ■—C.Purvis

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Church Raises Funds for Japan

FIRST, EDMONTON, along with members of the local arts community, held a concert fundraiser for Japan on April 30. Together, they performed Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, for 150 people. They raised about \$3,500.

First's choir sang in the chorus, organist Marnie Giesbrecht was the pianist, and one of First's choir members, Ron Long, was an actor and the main organizer. Rev. Henry Currie played the role of the Mikado.

"We were able to reach out into the community beyond the church and make a connection with people and get them involved in something worthy," Currie said. "We hope something like this will be an ongoing thing." ■ —with files from First, Edmonton



Thanks to a tasty moose dinner, St. Andrew's, St. John's, presented a cheque to John Chol (second from left) to help him on a mission to his native South Sudan. Posing with him are Kathy McKay, Catherine Whitehead, Penny Gillies, Lillian Crawford and Rev. Dr. Jonathan Dent.

Changes at GA

THIS MONTH'S General Assembly will tinker with a consent agenda, a lumping together of similar or simple recommendations for approval as a block.

Commissioners can ask to have any recommendation pulled out of the group and debated separately.

Assembly will be able to provide feedback about the process. ■—AM

Looking Ahead at Renewal AGM

"AS WE EXAMINE where the church should be in 30 years' time, if we place an emphasis on the institution we may be misleading ourselves," said Rev. Dr. Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, during a panel discussion organized by the Renewal Fellowship. He spoke alongside Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham, associate professor of systematic theology at Knox College, Toronto, and Rev. Jeremy Bellsmith, a former staff person with the Vine, the national office's congregational resource department, now serving his first charge at Burns, Ashburn, Ont. The trio was asked to address the question, "where will the church be in 30 years?"

"The issue facing us today is not necessarily decreasing membership," Fee continued. "It's our failure to recognize how our society has changed in seismic ways."

The panel discussion was organized as a prelude to the March 5 annual general meeting of the Renewal Fellowship, an evangelical movement within the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

"Each congregation needs to accept wherever they are—their context—

'Much work remains, [but] there have been blessings to rejoice in'

and accept that their mission may not look like the mission of the church down the street," suggested Bellsmith. "This 'creeping congregationalism' that I've heard about may not all be bad. In fact, congregations remain the lifeblood of our church and the ways and the places through which mission happens."

At the annual meeting, members

heard from Rev. Calvin Brown, the fellowship's 16-year executive director, who will be retiring at the end of June but will continue his part-time pastoring at Knox, Palmerston, and Knox, Drayton, Ont.

"As I reflect on the time I have been executive director of the Renewal Fellowship I marvel at what God has done," he wrote in his final annual report. "While much work remains, there have been significant blessings to rejoice in."

The fellowship hopes to find a new executive director by Sept. 1.

The board also expressed thanks for the "faithfulness, mercy and generosity" of God in getting the organization through another financially difficult year. The board faced a possible \$40,000 shortfall in revenue, but as in previous years, donations met their necessary expenses by the year's end.

■—C.Purvis

World News

New Models of Mission

THE WAY THE CHURCH has done mission with indigenous peoples in the past has to change, said Mary Fontaine, a Canadian Presbyterian minister and member of the Cree nation.

"I welcome the commitment of the World Communion of Reformed Churches to enter into dialogue with the world's indigenous Christians on how to create new models for mission," said Fontaine.

The first indigenous person elected to a senior post in a global organization of Reformed churches, Fontaine serves as vice-president of the North American region of the WCRC. She was speaking in an interview while in Switzerland for meetings of the organization's executive committee in May.

Discussions focused on adopting a strategic plan for the coming seven years. Programs in mission, theology and justice linked to indigenous issues were on the agenda.

At its founding meeting in June 2010, WCRC—a network of churches in 108 countries—announced plans to work towards reconciliation and healing with indigenous peoples.

"To do this work, churches need to step out of the box in unique ways,"

said Fontaine.

She said new models of mission are emerging. In ministries with indigenous peoples that seek to incorporate traditional music, dance, ceremony and art, leaders are gathering intergenerational and intercultural groups for positive experiences in churches.

As founder and director of Hummingbird Ministries in Richmond, B.C., Fontaine has initiated church events that incorporate ceremonies such as the ritualistic entry of tribal leaders carrying the cross, accompanied by traditional dancers.

"Some people say this is the first time they have been in a church since they left residential schools," Fontaine reported. "They are amazed to see such ceremonies as part of a church gathering." ■—WCRC

Indian Churches Challenged to Address Caste Discrimination

Churches in India were called upon to tackle "institutional casteism" at a conference in May organized by the World Council of Churches and Indian churches and groups.

"Institutional casteism has not been properly discussed in India ... and the

colloquium has drawn attention to the need for addressing the issue at all levels," said a statement released at the end of the Caste, Religion and Culture conference.

Under the rigid social hierarchy of the caste system in India, dalits—literally meaning "trampled upon" in Sanskrit—lie at the bottom of society. Dalits often survive by scavenging and doing menial jobs while living apart from upper castes such as Brahmins. Though dalits account for nearly two thirds of the 28 million Christians in India, they face discrimination even in churches and Christian institutions as upper castes hold positions of power.

University professor Rajkumar Hans said the deadwood of "oppressive caste hegemony" in India has gone deep into egalitarian religions like Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity. "Caste cannot be annihilated by good intentions and theological rhetoric. What we need is bold steps," said Hans, a Methodist.

"The hypocrisy between the proclamation of the church as an egalitarian community and practice of caste must end," said Rev. Philip Vinod Peacock, a professor in Kolkata. "Churches have to choose between Christ and caste." ■—ENI

Did You Get It?

To ensure delivery of the quarterly PC-Pak to your mailbox, contact: communications@presbyterian.ca
1-800-619-7301 ext. 330

The May edition of the PC-Pak landed in Presbyterian mailboxes across the country a few weeks ago. If you didn't get it, here's what you missed:

- several EquippingFor articles about hospitality from the perspectives of Congregational Development, Worship, Evangelism, and Christian Education.
- a flyer for CanadaYouth 2012
- Mission Capsules for June, July & August
- Prayer Partnership



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The Other Six Days Bizarre-o World

WEBSITES FROM THE EDGE, PLUS ONE. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

RADIO

Proudly proclaiming "The truth will set ye free," Pirate Christian Radio is an online radio station that sees itself as a beacon of truth. According to the station's creators and D.J., Pirate Christian Radio is free from the scurvy plagues of "goofy fads... purpose-drivenism... seeker-sensitivism... Emergent nonsense, and the sissy girly Oprah-fied religiosity that is being passed off as 'biblical Christianity.'" Basically, it's a very conservative guy that plays recorded sermons from some of today's most popular clergy and pauses them from time to time in order to prove them heretics.

FIND IT @ piratechristianradio.com



VIDEO

The Junior Christian Science Bible Lesson Program is a public access show based out of Los Angeles. It is without a doubt the most "interesting" children's show ever produced. The show's creator, David Hart says he was inspired by Jim Henson (who he claims was his Sunday school teacher). Among the many cast members and puppets you will find on the show are "Doug the Dog" and "Chip the Black Boy" who speaks to children about UFO encounters, his painful divorce and his "crack addict" ex-wife.

FIND IT @ youtube.com

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Okay, so this one is not Christian specifically, but I couldn't help but draw some attention to it. At Stop Alien Abductions, the good people there will give you step by step instructions on how to make a "thought screen helmet" that keeps aliens from reading or controlling your mind. According to the site, the helmets (which take about four hours to construct) are extremely effective at stopping several types of aliens and reports "only three failures...since 1998."

FIND IT @ stopabductions.com

WEBSITE

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Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

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The Arab Spring

BREAKTHROUGH THE WORLD HAS BEEN WAITING FOR. BY DAVID KILGOUR

RECENT EVENTS across the Middle East and North Africa appear remarkably similar in causation to what occurred in the 1970s in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and after 1989 across Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Many outsiders misread the Arab mind and heart as anti-Western, overlooking that it was really about well-justified anger towards their own dictatorships.

TUNISIA

Tunisians have long had a reputation for moderation, education and intellect. The third of the population online, including two million with Facebook accounts, created a communications spike, which emboldened aspirations for fuller lives. One email caught the national mood: "The Tunisian peoples' souls are burning."

Twenty-three years of indifference by President Ben Ali towards most Tunisians became the key factor in the collapse of his government. When the military evidently defied orders to fire on protesters, the regime was finished.

EGYPT

As Dennis Ignatius, Malaysia's former High Commissioner to Canada, put it, "For more than two weeks, Egyptians took to the streets to demand freedom and an end to decades of tyranny. They were shot at, beaten, bullied and jailed, yet they kept going, numbers swelling with each new attempt to silence them or break their will. They were seeking the same basic rights that the West has always insisted are the birthright of every human being."

The protests in Tahrir Square were led by an alliance of secular groups. Their disciplined efforts to maintain a non-violent opposition inspired the world.



BAHRAIN

The American journalist Tom Friedman offers an interesting perspective on Bahrain:

"While Facebook has gotten all the face time in Egypt, Tunisia and Bahrain, don't forget Google Earth ... On Nov. 27, 2006, on the eve of parliamentary elections in Bahrain, the *Washington Post* ran this report from there: 'Mahmood, who lives in a house (with his extended family), said he became even more frustrated when he looked up Bahrain on Google Earth and saw vast tracts of empty land, while tens of thousands of mainly poor Shiites were squashed together in small, dense areas. 'We are 17 people crowded in one small house, like

many people in the southern district,' he said. 'And you see on Google how many palaces there are and how the al-Khalifas [the Sunni ruling family] have the rest of the country to themselves'."

As the protests mounted, the king shamefully opened fire on pro-democracy protesters. Under the misapplied banner of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Saudis moved troops into Bahrain, claiming it was to counter Iranian influence. In reality, it was to put down democratic aspirations in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

LIBYA

The U.N.-adopted doctrine of Responsibility-to-Protect, applicable when

regimes turn on their own citizens, is being tested in Libya. We know many residents of Benghazi would have been slaughtered if NATO/French aircraft had not attacked Qaddafi's mostly hired-to-kill mercenaries advancing on the city.

Ways must be found under Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973 to continue to protect Libyans and to increase pressure on those around Qaddafi to remove him and his family.

DEMOCRACY RISING

Freedom turns out to be what most Arabs want and are willing to fight for. Too many Western governments and business people presumed that the best course was to work with dictators. It is a potent reminder that all, regardless of culture or religious background, aspire to determine how they will be governed.

For the 33 members of the Arab

League—all with large Muslim majorities—a major issue in terms of democratic governance will be how to apply the direction in the Qur'an: "commanding right and forbidding wrong."

When Indonesia, the largest Muslim democracy, held parliamentary elections in 2009, support for extremist parties declined. Most voters seemed concerned about good governance, jobs and economic growth.

CONCLUSION

When Europeans rose against Communists in 1989, Westerners rushed to cheer them on. When Burmese monks led protests against the country's military rulers in 2007, we encouraged them and insisted the generals must go. When Iran's rulers launched a bloody crackdown on peaceful demonstrators following the rigged 2009 presidential election, we demanded that those responsible be sanctioned.

There was no suggestion that somehow the people pressing for change with their very lives were not ready for decent governance. We understood that the transitions, after years of tyranny, would be messy affairs. We expected that mistakes would be made. Democracy is, after all, everywhere a work in constant progress. But we believed liberty would prevail and that democracy was an unstoppable force.

This is the breakthrough we've been waiting for, a response to radical Islam that we did not dare believe would come. We should be overjoyed that democracy and freedom are mobilizing Arab peoples. The West must not choose the safety of the status quo in the guise of "stability" over genuine liberty and democracy. ■

David Kilgour is a former MP for southeastern Edmonton.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



A young girl listens attentively to a teacher trained at the Madurai Non-formal Education Centre (MNEC), one of PWS&D's mission partners in Madurai, India. With PWS&D's support, MNEC offers impoverished children a brighter future through free education and after-school support.

In 2006, PWS&D established the Leaves & Fines Fund to channel planned gifts received from bequests, gift annuities, life insurance, etc. In the first three years after its establishment, generous donors contributed more than \$600,000 to the Fund, enabling PWS&D to meet its long-term obligations to such partners as MNEC.



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Letter from the Experimental Fund



A Gift That Keeps On Giving

REMEMBERING GEORGE VAN BEEK. BY FRED RENNIE

The auctioneer surveyed the audience before her. The numbers, as usual, were dwindling since the auction would soon be over. The major items had all been sold; what remained were the usual boxes of odds and sods. How could she get the bidding to move? Then she spied George sitting at the back of the room. George loved auctions—that was how he spent most of his Saturdays—and he was always good for a bid. “George, will you give me a bid for this box?” she asked. Back came his expected reply: “I’ll give you a dollar.” And the bidding began again.

Later, George would smile to himself as he headed home to Avondbloem in his pick-up truck, taking more treasures to add to his overflowing garage.

But George van Beek was also a giver—of his talents, his life, and his wealth. He was the instigator and principal benefactor of the Experimental Fund of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. He died on a wintry day last January in his 92nd year.

A rural resident of Glengarry County and retired session clerk of St. John’s, Cornwall, Ont., George was born in Holland in 1919 and came to Canada with his parents at the age of five. They settled near Chatham, Ont., where his father farmed tobacco. He left school after grade 10 and worked locally until war broke out in 1939, when he joined the Royal Canadian Navy. His mechanical aptitude was recognized, and he spent his years below the water line, in the engine rooms of ships on convoy escort duty in the North Atlantic. Surviving the war, he took advantage of government

aid to earn his degree in mechanical engineering from Dalhousie and the Nova Scotia Technical College.

In the late 1940s he joined Courtaulds, an international company that had plants around the world, including one in Cornwall, Ont. He quickly rose to become the superintendent of services. Under his direction the efficiency of the local plant increased remarkably, and he was sent to Australia in the late 1960s to perform a similar turnaround. He then took early retirement, freeing himself up to devote time to the work

**There was a desire
to see things done
differently**

of the church, both locally and nationally. For a number of years he served on what was then the Administrative Council. It was this experience that disturbed him. Efficiency and creativity were marks of a progressive industry—why could these things not apply to the church? There was no “eureka moment” for George, just a growing frustration with the status quo and a desire to see things done differently.

It wasn’t long before his idea of creative, experimental ministry emerged. Gathering a few people about him who shared his dream, he set out to establish the Experimental Fund, financing it out of his own pocket. His first gift of \$5,000 in support of his idea was made in 1981 to assist the church’s initiative to “double” its membership. Other gifts followed for projects submitted by individuals and

congregations. In 1984, the fund was officially established by the General Assembly, and it continues today.

The capital base of the fund is now over half a million dollars. Since 1981, over \$260,000 of interest income has been issued in grants—ranging from \$200 to \$12,000—to 122 projects. Significant among them are the Cariboo Ministry in British Columbia, a communal garden in Ontario, a circulating library ministry in Nova Scotia, coffee house and puppet ministries, parish nursing programs, the Elders’ Institute, a campus ministry drum circle, the Talking Record, and the Minister and the Small Computer—a project in the 1980s exploring what then-new technology could do for clergy, congregations and the church.

With George’s death the capital base of the fund will increase substantially. The word “Avondbloem,” meaning “evening flower,” will be added to its name at his request, in recognition of his Dutch roots. For over 50 years George was assisted by his late beloved wife, Evelyn, whose beneficence at her death complemented the fund.

A graveside service was held in May, when George was buried beside Evelyn in Martintown, Ont. They rest peacefully beneath their stone on which is inscribed, “Quietly they lived, quietly they served.” And their gift keeps on giving. ■

Rev. Dr. Fred Rennie was minister at St. John’s Cornwall, Ont., between 1975 and 2001. He was one of the original six directors, and is currently honorary director and secretary/administrator of the Experimental Fund. Visit presbyterian.ca/xfund to apply.



Servant and Minister

REVEALING GOD'S LIFE, MERCY AND LOVE. BY CLYDE ERVINE

Ministry is a churchy word used regularly but imprecisely. More often than not, Presbyterians use it to describe what clergy do. If done well, such ministry is considered meaningful, if somewhat mysterious. After all, God apparently calls only a select few into 'the ministry,' leaving the laity to pay for it! Though this isn't our

denomination's official understanding of what ministry is, it's what many in the pews believe.

So what is ministry? I begin with God. First the haunting words of Isaiah 40: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth." ➤

The Lord continues his ministry in and through the church. All Christians are called to share in the ministry of Christ. As his body on earth we all have gifts to use in the church and in the world. To the glory of Christ, our King and Head. Living Faith, 7.2.1

The awareness that we humans stand before God is faith's beginning point. But what is that God really like? Humans lack the capacity to figure God out; only God can reveal God

The awareness that we humans stand before God is faith's beginning point. But what is that God really like? Humans lack the capacity to figure God out; only God can reveal God. And that's what we believe God has done through the law, the prophets, the apostles, and especially through Jesus Christ. Though there are many biblical titles for Jesus, the title of servant or minister (the two words are synonymous in the New Testament) is arguably the most potent. As God's servant, Jesus served God's purpose for the world by revealing God's life, mercy and love.

The Greek origins of *diakonos*, which we translate as servant or minister, are humble indeed, springing from the despised work done in the homes of the affluent by slaves. Astoundingly, this was the word that the New Testament writers chose to highlight Jesus' ministry. The gospels see him as fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of a servant who would bear the sins of God's people, being humiliated, scourged, and killed in the process. Likewise the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2 describes Jesus as giving up all divine privileges in order to become the suffering servant willing to go to the cross for us.

Jesus' sacrificial ministry became the foundation on which the New Testament goes on to discuss the church's ministry. According to John 20:21, Jesus commissioned his disciples prior to his ascension in these words: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." It's not just that Jesus expected the church to continue his ministry in the world; he expected that ministry to imitate his Spirit-empowered, sacrificial humility.

What this means is that the church doesn't have an independent ministry that can be shaped or set aside at will. The church's ministry derives from Christ and is about Christ; that is, we're given a role in Christ's ongoing ministry

of "bringing God to people and people to God." (Eugene Peterson) In addition, the church's ministry is essentially corporate; the New Testament doesn't focus so much on the details of any individual's ministry as on the responsibility of the whole church to live out Christ's ministry in the world. Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12 about different spiritual gifts being given to each church member is nicely balanced with a concern for the unity and the united ministry of the church as a body.

Sadly, the cruciform, derivative and corporate nature of the church's ministry was muddled in the course of its long history. An overemphasis on clergy power and privilege, as if clergy alone were ministers of Christ, being supported by a passive laity, led to the disfigurement of the church's life and witness. Realizing this, the Protestant Reformers tried to redress the imbalance. But though John Calvin sought to invest the everyday lives of Christians with new status and significance, his concern for church order led him to continue the emphasis on clergy as Christ's ministers. Only in recent decades has the vocation of all believers as ministers of Christ in the world been recovered. Concomitant with this has been a refreshing realization that the central task of those called to pastoral leadership is to equip every church member so that all believers can be faithful ministers of Christ in every sphere of life. (See Ephesians 4:11-12)

Though the notion that ministry is a clergy preserve lingers, the sense that every Christian has been commissioned to be God's witness and worker is growing. Church effectiveness in the 21st century will depend on it. ■

Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine is minister at Central, Hamilton, Ont.



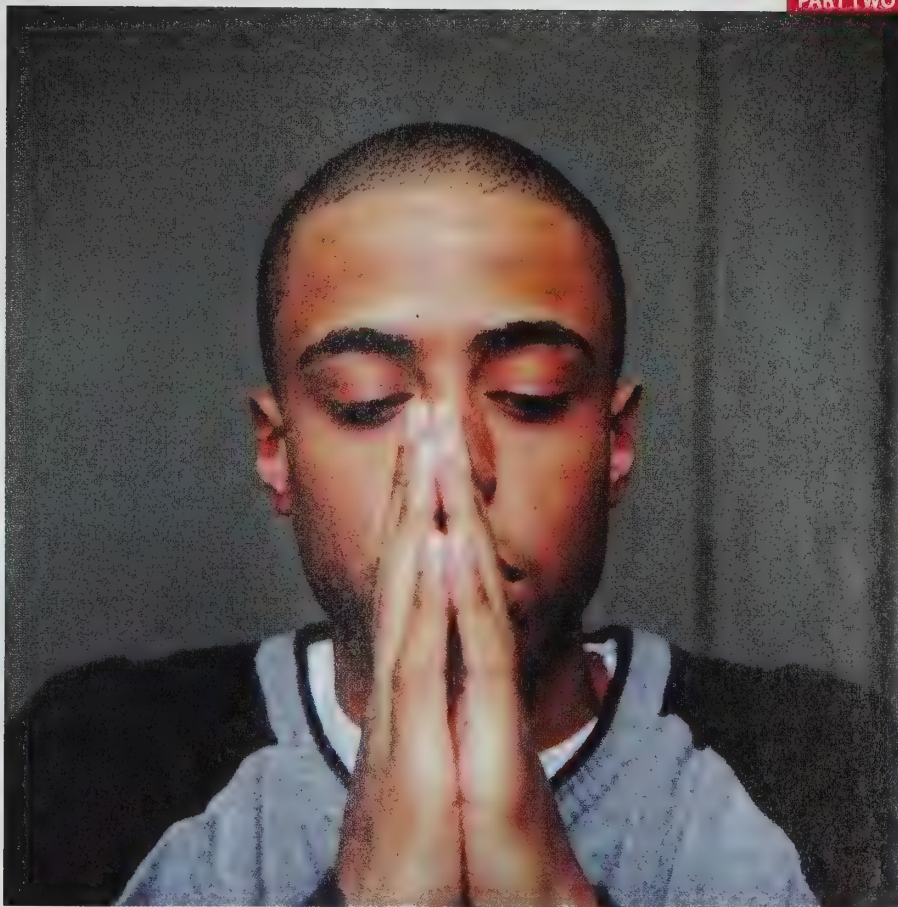
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Communications Office
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

PART TWO



Faith and Praxis

DEVELOPING A FULLY EQUIPPED PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS. BY KAREN BACH

“We preach

the gospel daily and sometimes we use words.” This is an expression repeated frequently at Yonge Street Mission where I minister. No matter what his or her position, each YSM staff person is expected to be a model of gospel living. The assumption is that we are all called to minister in various ways

and God has or will provide us with the training and insight to fulfill our roles with excellence. We are a priesthood of believers. According to our CEO, Rick Tobias, we are the church of the future.

In this setting, to ask whether a theological understanding of church as the “priesthood of all believers” is superior to a comprehension of

church as “clergy set aside as special to ‘equip the saints,’” is to ask the wrong question. In my experience and opinion, it is not either/or, but rather both/and. That is why some at YSM are ordained clergy. For if you expect all God’s people to be ministering in the world every day, you have to have teaching elders involved in educating and equipping them to ensure ►

In reality, today's Christians are wiser, better educated, more empowered and capable of making intelligent, theological decisions

they are adequately and appropriately prepared to minister to God's beloved.

Jesus taught his disciples to go out into the community to provide healing and hope. Likewise, ordained clergy and elders play the critical role of equipping the whole people of God. For it falls to them to offer people working in the secular world a biblical framework within which to evaluate their motivations, actions and decisions.

Unfortunately, sometimes elements within churches work against this integration. In some, the perspective that the world outside the church is evil and to be guarded against, has led individuals to bifurcate their experience. They accept the necessity of working in the corrupt world, guarding themselves against its influence and relying upon church activities to provide a social life to keep them from being contaminated. In other churches, individuals hand over their freedom to question to clergy leaders and don't explore their faith in any depth. Rather, they maintain a rudimentary theology that bears no connection to the adult world in which they operate.

In reality, today's Christians are wiser, better educated, more empow-

ered and capable of making intelligent, theological decisions. They are competent to view their daily reality through a theological lens and to make sense of their work-a-day world through their faith in Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus' disciples continued to work in the world as fishermen and tax collectors while they spread the gospel, so too Christians of today are exhilarated by the opportunities they have to bring together their faith and their praxis. Longing to fulfill the mandate laid out for them in James' epistle, they want to integrate their faith and their works.

The emphasis on education in the Reformed tradition serves this model of ministry well, for people want and need to know their Bible and theology if they are to take their faith into the marketplace in a meaningful way. Whether they take courses themselves as lay people, or whether they engage in conversation with their teaching elder in an effort to expand their knowledge and understanding, deep learning about their faith is a critical element in the development of a fully equipped 'priesthood of all believers.'

Fortunately, within the Presby-

terian Church, there is a growing acknowledgment that God's will and work goes on in the world and is performed by ordinary people. At Flemington Gateway Mission, Evangel Hall Mission, Boarding Homes Ministry and other such organizations, Christians minister daily to people who are marginalized and oppressed. They do this by providing food, conversation, education, prayer and a wide variety of other supports. Similarly, but perhaps not so evidently, in board rooms, the marketplace, hospitals, educational facilities and on assembly lines, Christians also minister to people who are experiencing challenges and struggles.

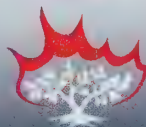
Wherever they work, play, or find themselves, Christians have an opportunity and a responsibility to be the face of Christ to, and to see Christ's face in, those whom they meet. It is only when they are empowered and encouraged to see ministry as their life's calling as the priesthood of all believers that they will truly grow in their faith. ■

Rev. Karen Bach received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Knox College, Toronto, this year. She recently retired from the Yonge Street Mission.

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Pentecôte by Jean II Restout, ca. 1732

The Words We Leave Out

WE NEED TO HEAR THE WORDS WE'D RATHER AVOID. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

May 12: *Pentecost*

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b;
Acts 2:1-21

One scholar said it was worth learning Hebrew just to read Psalm 104. It sings on the page. Until we come to the last verse. Our reading today gives us the last phrases: "Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!" The editors of the lectionary don't want us to speak

the whole verse in worship! "Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!"

The psalm-writer is overwhelmed by God's goodness. God's power in creation. God's kindness to all living things. In the light of God's grace, human sin stands in sharp contrast. The writer cries out, "Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more."

We look at this world, and we cry out, too. We trust God understands our distress. But we'd like to see some results!

There are no vowels in the Hebrew text. Most translations give an 'oh' sound to a key syllable in verse 35. That makes it "consumed." As in destroyed by fire. That word can also take an 'ah' sound. "Consumed" becomes "complete." Fulfilled. Whole. Let sinners be made whole by God's goodness. Redeemed. To sin no more.

That's a minority opinion, but I have it from two learned rabbis. One ancient, and one my neighbour today. "Let sinners be redeemed, and let the wicked be wicked no more."

The Talmud tells of Rabbi Meir ►

and his wife, Bruriah. Rabbi Meir was often harassed. Mugged. His neighbours made his life miserable. He took great comfort in praying Psalm 104. Especially the last verse.

Bruriah heard him praying for the downfall of a neighbour. She told him to look at his Bible again. "Don't you know that verse can be read 'may sins cease'? Pray for sins to cease. Don't pray for sinners to die. Pray they may be redeemed." Rabbi Meir accepted his wife's biblical scholarship. He prayed as she advised, and his neighbour changed his ways.

Let sinners become whole, and let wickedness be no more.

We need to hear words we'd rather avoid. Words that remind us of the reality of human sin. And of God's desire to rescue all sinners. The offence in verse 35 isn't the harshness of the usual translation. The words hurt us,

because they apply to us. Not just the people we call sinners.

I think that's the lesson Bruriah was trying to teach Rabbi Meir.

The prayer at the end of Psalm 104 challenges us to leave the fate of sinners to God. That includes the notorious sinners. The Hitlers, Mugabes, and Graham Jameses. And the garden-variety sinners, like you and me. Leave them—and ourselves—to God's mercy.

Pray for their redemption. And ours. Pray that the constant repetition of sins and wickedness may cease. Cease from the earth. And cease in our lives.

Then get to work to be answers to our own prayers. That includes dealing honestly with the effects of sin and the consequences of wickedness.

Reading from Acts ends too soon. It stops before telling us what happens after Peter preaches. People ask, "What should we do?"

Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38) The Spirit comes with power to redeem. Pentecost is about new beginnings.

We pray: Let sinners be redeemed, and let wickedness be no more. We dream of a day when that prayer is answered.

We believe that sin is real. And so is forgiveness. We believe that change is possible. And repentance is necessary. Psalm 104 takes 34-and-a-half verses to remind us that God is good. That means we can face truth we try to avoid and deny. Face it with hope. ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence De Wolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.

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PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2011 Edition, Issue 2

ABRIDGED
VERSION



Small Steps Lead to Big Changes in Pakistan

THE LAND AROUND MIRPURKHAS, PAKISTAN IS achingly dry and desiccated in winter. Located in the south-west corner of the country, on the edge of Thar Desert, vehicles stir up cyclones of dust as they race along bumpy, rough roads. The land is so parched that the soil cracks and the sun scorches.

PWS&D is working with local partner, Church World Service – Pakistan/Afghanistan to implement food security programs with people living in the region.

Babar Kaloi is one such village, of about 250 people, gathered together in homes made of dried mud. It's an agricultural community where farmers have about 2-3 acres of land to grow everything their families need to eat. Most men in the area are unemployed, taking jobs as day labourers whenever they can get them.

Food security in Babar Kaloi is top priority. Food security means making sure one can access enough quality food to stay healthy. In

Canada, where the population spends an average of 10% of their income on their diets—one of the lowest grocery bills in the world—and with grocery stores that exhibit a selection of over 30,000 types of food, the notion may seem a little hard to relate to.

Things are very different in Babar Kaloi. People here may spend up to 80% of their income on food. Having enough food is an ongoing struggle. The goal isn't just to fill a hungry stomach; it's about finding ways to ensure food is available for families every day, year round, for the long-term. Unfortunately, too many people simply do not have access to enough nourishing food, or the money to purchase it.

Focusing on Agricultural Practices

Small adjustments to village life in Babar Kaloi are making big changes in both the production of food and its availability. PWS&D's program partner is teaching simple agricultural techniques that are improving ►



Women sharing lunch together with food they learned how to grow through the program

access to food, such as creating small gardens to grow vegetables, raising livestock, preserving food, and building and maintaining irrigation ponds.

Women in the community have established self-help groups where they learn how to earn money and monitor a savings fund that allows them to access loans in order to start small businesses for extra income. Some women open modest shops, selling snacks out of a trunk and using their profits to buy food, send their kids to school or purchase household necessities. Some use their loan to purchase livestock, like cattle or chickens, for extra milk, meat and eggs.

Hameeda and Her Goats

That's exactly what Hameeda did. Hameeda purchased two goats using a loan of only 2,000 rupees (about \$23) from the self-help group. She's raising them so she'll have milk for her

five children and hopes to sell the goats when they're older for the income and to purchase a bigger goat for even more milk. She's already paid back her loan and is grateful for the opportunity the self-help group has provided her.

Making Food Security a Reality

There's a lot of work to do in Babar Kaloi, just like many other communities in the area. Women walk 10 km to collect water every day and drought is an ongoing problem. Children suffer from too many hygiene-related health issues and dangerous pollutants from a nearby sugar cane factory contaminate a water source that is used as drinking water for people and animals. However, PWS&D's program partner continues to demonstrate that small changes can make lasting, tangible improvements. Together, we're finding ways to tackle long-term poverty and make food security a reality.



Presbyterian World Service & Development

The development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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Something Worth Hoping For

BUT ... WITH SOME FEAR AND TREMBLING.

BY SARAH THOMPSON

THERE ARE A FEW WORDS that come to mind when I think about how I feel as a new graduate entering into ministry. I assume many would like to hear that I am excited, can't wait to get my hands dirty, or that I am eager to get my feet wet. And certainly these feelings are in me somewhere. But there are also other words that come to mind, among them: fear and trembling.

Fear and trembling for the mistakes I will make, the opportunities I will miss or the wrong things I will say. What if I say the wrong name during a wedding, and I ask Mary if she would like to take Bill as her husband, instead of John? Or, if I offer to drink the bread and eat the cup?

But, it also runs a bit deeper. Like thousands of Canadians, each morning I wake up and turn on my computer (or other communicator of choice) to catch the morning news. And after reading only a few headlines, I am ready and willing to agree with Eugene Peterson (*Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*) when he writes, "The sheer quantity of wreckage around us is appalling: wrecked bodies, wrecked marriages, wrecked careers ..." And his list goes on, to which I would

add: wrecked cities, wrecked countries and a distressed and groaning creation.

The church is in exile, Walter Brueggeman writes in *Cadences of Home: Preaching Among Exiles*, having lost its sense of identity and purpose, overwhelmed by an anxious and wrecked world. And somehow as an ordained minister, I will make a feeble attempt to administer the Word and Sacraments in its midst. Maybe I will never get the hang of it, but maybe ministry is not a mystery to be solved, or puzzle to be mastered.

Maybe fear and trembling is not a bad thing. Paul calls the Philippians to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12) And why? Because it is God who is really at work. And in this I can be confident. Also in fear and trembling, prayer is often a first response. It is at the point when we realize that we don't have all the answers, that we can't do it on our own, and that we find confidence in the love of God, the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit. It is in prayer that I come face to face with the reality that

it is in Christ that my ministry begins. And in Christ there is hope.

That is what I am most excited about: That I have been called to proclaim the hope of the gospel. That despite the chaos, the pain and anxiety around us, there will be a day when "the dwelling place of God is with people ... [when] He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things [will] have passed away." (Revelations 21:1-4) And that is something worth hoping for. ■

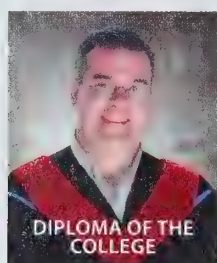
Sarah Thompson graduates this year from Presbyterian College, Montreal. You can see her graduation photograph on page 30.



Graduates 2011

Knox College, Toronto

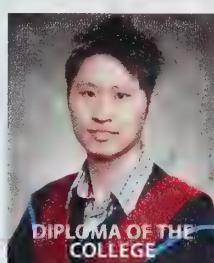
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Master of Divinity
Michael Burns
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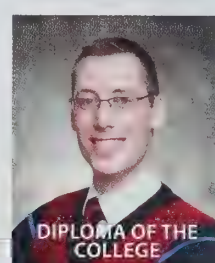
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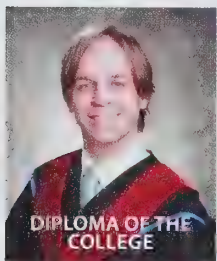
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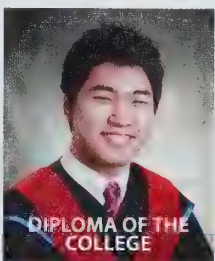
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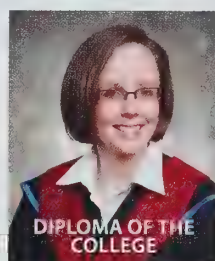
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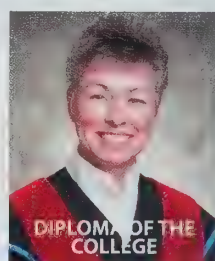
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Master of Divinity
SunHee Park
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Heather Paton
Paulin Memorial, Windsor



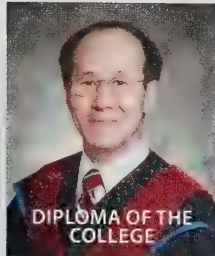
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Linda Patton-Cowie
Thornhill

Knox College Continued
on page 29 ...

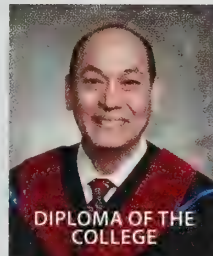
*Knox College Continued
from page 28 ...*



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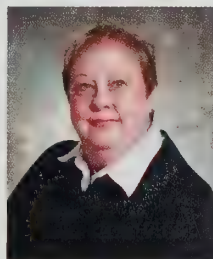
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*Vancouver School of Theology
& The Presbyterian College on page 30 ...*

Vancouver School of Theology

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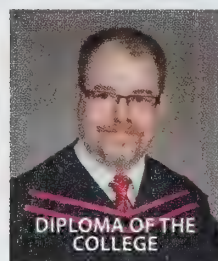


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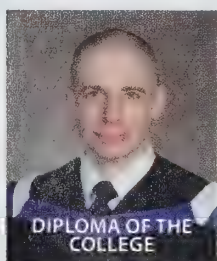
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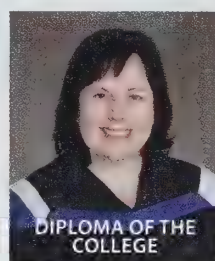
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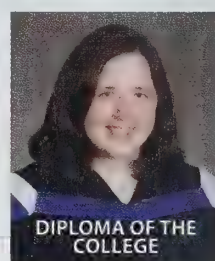
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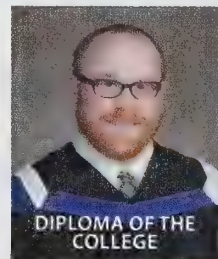


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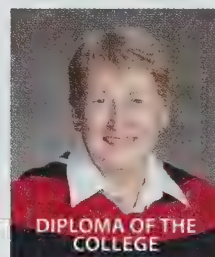
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Diploma in Ministry
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Little Narrows Presbyterian

Advice to a Young Minister

HERE ARE A FEW LESSONS TO
BE LEARNED FROM KARL BARTH:

COMPILED BY REV. DR. WILLIAM KLEMPA

1. "The pulpit," Barth said, "is the real arena of the Kingdom of God". In the busyness of your parish ministry and the many demands that are made upon you, never forget that. Order your priorities accordingly.
2. Like Barth, sit before your Bible studying it each day. "Plow it like a farmer, furrow after furrow," as Barth's friend, Eduard Thurneysen said. Barth did.
3. Love your people as Karl Barth loved his congregation. Live in solidarity with them in their struggles.
4. Keep the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other, as Barth famously said. And the internet.
5. Always have a solid theological book like Calvin's *Institutes* on the go.
6. Find a colleague or mentor with whom you can discuss theological, ecclesiastical, social and political issues as Barth did with Eduard Thurneysen.

Rev. Dr. William Klempa is principal emeritus of
The Presbyterian College, Montreal.

Is Multiculturalism Bad for the Church?

A REFLECTION ON CHURCH AND ETHNICITY. BY DANIEL CHO

“We’re very multicultural ... just look at all the different ethnic restaurants we have!”

I’ve often heard this said as proof of our multiculturalism. It’s usually easy to connect the idea of diversity with the existence of difference without looking deeper at the meaning of that difference. In the church, I believe ethnic diversity has to mean something more than simply looking at it from afar, the same way we sometimes think about our Greektowns, Chinatowns, Koreatowns and Little Italies—that is, in my own time, on my own terms and according to my mood. The New Testament accounts of early Christian churches tell of a remarkable degree of diversity within these faith communities. However, far from painting these as ideal situations, the apostle Paul’s letters clearly indicate they were fraught

with social inequity and factionalism as well as cultural prejudice and conflict. (See especially Romans 10-15; 1 Corinthians 1-14; Galatians 2-4; Colossians 3-4.) It is against this backdrop of bona fide diversity of class, gender, race and culture that Paul implores Christians towards “unity in Christ” and to strive to become the “body of Christ.” These words were spoken for the sake of their survival and spiritual integrity since they touched upon the very heart of Christian faith and fellowship. Achieving unity in diversity was without doubt the ideal.

It is clear that attaining and managing church integration was very difficult. And so, surely, if it was so difficult for them back then, even with Paul’s

guidance, we shouldn’t expect anything different today! It is not an easy thing to do even if we might think we have done it. In fact, for some self-described “multi-ethnic” congregations, there are those who would doubt such labeling is even justified—if what we call ethnic diversity means just a modest spattering of colour in the pews, but it is not evident in the church leadership or doesn’t bear out in the church culture and ethos. As a crude comparison, we wouldn’t call a traditionally black church multi-ethnic just because there are a few white folks in the service! In the same way, an organization can’t be said to profess gender equality when the corporate culture and leadership are still predominantly male. The road to achieving authentic diversity and equality of any kind often begins with stubborn honesty, serious intentionality and collective struggle.

Where multiculturalism is visibly ‘succeeding’ in the church is in the growth of ethnic-specific congregations. If we look at situations such as the Korean, Ghanaian and Chinese churches we can see a general trend of increase in both their congrega- ➤



If it is true that we the church are so segmented, then what is the gain for the larger church other than the smug knowledge that various ethnic congregations exist among us?



tional membership as well as number of congregations. (Recently the Presbytery of West Toronto approved the establishment of a Nigerian church-plant, the first for the Presbyterian Church). This corresponds with the overall trend not only in North America but also around the world—that while churches in general are experiencing a decline, ethnic churches are in fact growing. Asia, Africa and Latin America are quickly becoming the new spiritual home.

In our context then, the multicultural project seems to be quite successful; it has made minority groups feel validated and created in them a sense of rightful belonging in a nation which loudly and clearly promotes these social and political conditions. They were encouraged

Defining the word:

There are many shades of meaning for the word 'multiculturalism.' I am using the term here in a general sense to describe the state and allowance of ethnic and cultural diversity. Related concepts such as interculturalism and transculturation, while important, are not central to the thoughts presented here.

to express who they were in their social organizations and in maintaining their cherished customs. In essence, by the strength of their own cultural cohesion, many ethnic groups flourished under these conditions. But in many ways this success was self-contained—by that I mean these groups blossomed so much so that their involvement, whether in business, finance or religion, need not extend beyond their own communities. The result is less interaction and integration of diverse groups of people because of healthier self-identity and clearer cultural lines of demarcation. This can create in some of us a feeling of greater distance between people-groups, even with those who make up our church. For the average person in the pew, how many of us have interacted with Hungarians? How many Ghanaians? First Nations? Portuguese-speaking? Arabic-speaking? Spanish-speaking? Koreans or Chinese (except when we go to convenience stores and restaurants)? These are all cultural groups represented in our denomination but who have their own congregations and can worship in the languages, styles and manners in which they derive spiritual comfort. (A Korean

friend of mine recently said to me that although he is functionally bilingual, he prefers to worship in the Korean language because "it sounds more proper and meaningful.")

To take it one step further, as we know, for the past decade the Korean churches, with the endorsement of General Assembly, have functioned as two autonomous, culture-specific presbyteries: Han-Ca East and West. Let there be little doubt that the ability to worship in one's own language and cultural milieu is both emotionally empowering and faith affirming. So does the success of multiculturalism depend on empowerment of ethnic group identities to have their own worship communities according to their respective customs and practices? Or is it seen more authentically as people coming together as an integrated body irrespective of culture or ethnicity? Which end is multiculturalism designed to serve? Depending on one's vantage point, we will understand a healthy, diverse Presbyterian Church to mean either more multi-ethnic groups worshipping under one roof, or the fostering of more ethnic-specific congregations. Of course

we can, and do, have both but as we will see later there are aspects of each side that are seemingly in direct conflict.

If it is true that we the church are so segmented, then what is the gain for the larger church other than the smug knowledge that various ethnic congregations exist among us? There might even be some in these very congregations—members as well as ministers—who feel detached and insulated from the larger church body. If there is no meaningful personal interaction across these cultural lines, then how can we claim ourselves to be the body of Christ? Perhaps we have been so occupied with extolling the virtues of multiculturalism over meals of souvlaki, roti, spaghetti and kimchee that we have failed to ask the hard question:

is multiculturalism bad for the church?

As the church I think it's important for us to ask, what is our lived experience in terms of our Christian attitude, approach and response to multiculturalism, which has been Canada's official policy since the early 1970s? At that time, the view was that promotion of ethnic/cultural diversity was key to cultivating a healthy society. Some would understand this to mean greater assimilation and less separation in order to have a robust democracy; on the other hand, others might argue for greater respect for cultural differences and endorsement for group autonomy in a just society. So can we say that multiculturalism is a good thing primarily because it allows us to be drawn closer together by blurring cultural lines and

thereby fostering mutual recognition and more meaningful relationships? Or is it good primarily because under the law the cultural lines are made clearer, thereby fostering mutual recognition and more meaningful relationships? I want to provoke honest discussion on this unavoidable topic both as Presbyterians and Canadians so we will be able to address what kind of church we will choose to become in our ever-diversifying denomination and world. In Part Two, I will expand on the meaning of this article's title and offer some thoughts as to how this conversation can continue. ■

Rev. Daniel Cho is minister at Rexdale, Toronto. Part two of his essay will appear next month.



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UNDERSTANDING

What is God like?

What is human nature?

How does God relate to us?

How should humans relate
to each other?

GOD & HUMANITY

A THOUSAND YEARS OF PONDERING LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS IN JEWISH SCRIPTURE

The Old Testament has a lot to say to these questions. When we read these ancient scriptures we find a variety of stories, poems, prophecies and proverbs that express the theologies of our ancestors in the faith. It's important to hear that there are different voices of faith in the Old Testament, different ways of looking at God, the world and human beings. The Old Testament is really a library of books, documents that speak as distinctive witnesses. Especially since that 'library' took over 1,000 years to create, it contains different ways to express what's important because the circumstances and contexts of the writings varied during those centuries. Being able to hear these different voices, the different theologies of the Old Testament, will increase our understanding of God's word. This will also help us to read the New Testament better, because the New Testament writers turned to these Old Testament theologies to express who Jesus was and what his life, death and resurrection meant.

COVENANT THEOLOGY

Read: Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 15, 17-19

Let's start by looking at covenant theology, one of the most familiar because it's so common in the Old Testament. Who is God? How do humans know God? "The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome." Typical of covenant theology, this passage (Deuteronomy 10) expresses that God is sovereign and powerful, the Lord of history and the Creator of the cosmos. Creation is God's handiwork and also the realm of nature and human history where God's reality is made real.

However, covenant theology said even more about God. Israel had experienced a God who was on the side of the oppressed and in fact saved them from the power of their oppressors when they were delivered from state slavery in Egypt. God is one "who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers." The only God for Israel was a God who was a gracious, merciful deliverer for God's people in their weakness and whose characteristic act was gracious salvation. By experiencing and remembering God's merciful actions for them in the past they learned of God's nature, God's faithfulness and His love for them.

What about human nature? For covenantal theology, humans are a pretty mixed bunch—we're not perfect, but we're also not all bad. Humans certainly can be good; we can be obedient, faithful, compassionate and helpful. However, we can also be evil; we can be disobedient, arrogant, oppressive and hurtful of others.

So how then are we to live? Based on God's sovereignty and gracious actions in saving the people, humans in return

are to make decisions as if that revelation is how we in fact should also live. Here's the heart of the covenant: as God has been faithful to God's people, so we should be faithful to God by keeping God's commandments. As God has been gracious and merciful with humans, so we must be gracious and merciful with each other.

The laws or commands of the covenant are the way the people of God embody who God has been for them and what God expects of people. Law is not empty or niggling legalisms cooked up by small-minded scribes to control people. Living the covenant, being faithful to God and God's ways, honouring and praising God, these are the ways of life and fullness and wellbeing. When humans keep covenant, they remember that they were once slaves and that God was gracious to them, so they ought faithfully to live a life and create a society that in the same way is gracious and giving toward everyone, especially the weak and desperate.

But remember the other part of human nature—that we can also be disobedient, arrogant, and hurtful? Here covenantal theology is equally clear. When we behave like this, we turn away from God's ways and fail to live out the blessing and grace God intended. Our lives are mean, and greed and arrogance determine our actions. For such people, covenantal theology warns that they will lose their connection with God and God's blessings for life. But the covenantal approach also offers forgiveness—we can turn back to God and God will graciously pardon us and restore us to covenant life. This is echoed in another phrase that rings throughout the OT—"God's steadfast love endures forever"—which is a way of saying that God's covenant love and faithfulness endure forever.

Covenant theology is convinced that humanity finds wellbeing in obedience to God's covenant that creates wellbeing for the whole of creation and humankind. In this, humans live out the grace and faithful love of God, the one who says, "I will be your God and you will be my people."

PRIESTLY THEOLOGY

Read: Leviticus 19:1-3, 11-12; 20:24b-26

A distinctly different belief is found in books like Leviticus, Numbers, Ezekiel, and Chronicles—priestly theology. "I am the Lord your God; I have separated you from the peoples. You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean. You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy." (Leviticus 20) Here, the priests of ancient Israel were making an important theological statement. Holiness is central to God, and thus to creation that God made and humanity that God formed.

But what is holiness? For ancient Israel, the basic concept

AS GOD HAS BEEN GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL WITH HUMANS, SO WE MUST BE GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL WITH EACH OTHER

behind the idea of holiness is “that which is set apart,” (Leviticus 19) or, in other words, holiness pertains to actions, places, objects, time and people when they are set apart from common or ordinary reality. Holiness thus is based on the separation of all of reality into distinct spheres of holiness or lack of holiness. Such a theology thus distinguishes purity from impurity, life from death, clean from unclean, order from chaos, and wholeness from partiality or mixture.

So priestly theology expressed the conviction that God is totally other than any human or limited reality. God is set apart, distinct in God’s power, sovereignty, and wholeness or perfection. The basic conviction of a faith stance centered on holiness is that God created the universe to be an ordered, living, and holy cosmos. Disorder, chaos and impurity threaten order, stability and holiness. Thus, the cosmos and all actions within the cosmos are to participate in the order of holiness and to avoid impurity and disorder. Life in this way can be a blessed reflection of God’s holiness in the beauty, abundance and harmony of creation.

However, holiness can also be a dangerous power that breaks out against anything or anyone if it comes in contact with something not pure. This idea comes from the ancients’ understanding that chaos and disorder are threatening to life. So that which is unholy, unclean, partial, or of a mixed type not according to its “kind” is the opposite of holy and cannot be in contact with the holy. Likewise, if a person or object came in contact with something impure, then they had to be either purified through a ritual or destroyed.

For priestly theology, holiness in the human realm required a social system that expresses and protects this ordering of the cosmos. This means that the human order is meant to mirror the order and stability of God’s creation. Thus, the priests saw the human task to order all human life strictly according to everything that is clean, pure, whole and life-giving.

The laws about what God’s people can eat and not eat seem petty to us, but for the ancients, when a person ate something that was not declared “clean” by God, they were “out of order” and defiled themselves by not living according to the distinctions and separations God created. For the ancient Israelites these laws were a beautiful expression of living in harmony with God’s created order.

So also with the social order. Humans must carry out holiness by such actions as revering their elders, keeping Sabbath, taking care of the poor and vulnerable, being honest and fair in all actions. These social, political and economic instruc-

tions are not neutral or optional guidelines; rather, they are the stuff of a holy way of life that reflects the order, goodness and blessedness of the creation and the Creator.

Priestly theology is convinced that through maintaining holiness and order, humanity can live in harmony with God’s ways. This leads to wellbeing for the whole of creation and humankind. In this, humans live out the holiness of God, the one who says, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.”

WISDOM THEOLOGY

Read: Proverbs 8

Proverbs 8 begins with a startling image: a woman stands in the street and calls out, inviting passersby to accept her invitation. This sounds like we’re veering into inappropriate territory, but the woman is not of a questionable profession, but rather is a picture of wisdom. She invites her hearers to live with insight, intelligence and prudence and she extols the virtues of wisdom. Wisdom theology is well represented in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job and in numerous psalms. Wisdom forms, like proverbs and parables, are scattered throughout the stories and prophecies of the Old Testament.

In some ways, wisdom is the most distinct voice in the Old Testament because it is founded on a unique understanding of how we know God. Covenant and priestly theologies are founded on the conviction that God’s ways are known to humans by revelation. God was revealed to human beings through specific awesome actions, particularly in the foundational events of the escape from Egypt and the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. In God’s presence and words, the people learned about God’s power and also heard the covenant or priestly laws by which they were to live.

But wisdom is different. At the beginning of Ecclesiastes, the sage talks about his method of learning: “I, the Teacher, applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven.” And in Proverbs 24, we read, “I passed by the field of one who was lazy, and see, it was all overgrown with weeds and its wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it, I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber ➤

and poverty will come upon you like a robber."

Do you see the source of knowledge in these passages? The attentive human being learns about the world through careful observation and consideration of actions and consequences. Knowledge about the world is available freely to humans through their own powers of intelligence and examination. No special revelations are needed. For wisdom theology, God created the world and God is the author of life, and humans can understand much about the world and how to live in it by observing God's order in the world.

Wisdom puts confidence in the human being and our abilities to learn, make choices, and shape our lives well. Prosperity, honour and long life all come from making wise choices and living with intelligence and discretion. However, wisdom also teaches about how to avoid an evil or miserable life by avoiding the pitfalls of foolishness like hasty words, greed and laziness. Wisdom teaches that actions have consequences—if you work well, you will be rewarded, if you're lazy or hasty, you'll come to a bad end.

Except of course, when things don't turn out that way. The ancients were observant enough to see that sometimes bad things happen to good people and sometimes the wicked become successful. The ancients pondered long on this difficult problem so that it became a major theme in the wisdom approach. Both the books of Job and Ecclesiastes are extended meditations on the problems of innocent suffering. There is no good answer, even in Job, to the questions. In the end, Job seems to be a long reflection on one of wisdom's most basic assertions, that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." When we realize we are not God, that we cannot control our life in the world, then we are beginning to be wise because we lose our arrogance and admit our humanity. That is wisdom.

Wisdom theology is convinced that we can know a lot by observing the created world and we can make good choices about life through diligence and learning. However, wisdom also recognizes that suffering happens to all of us and sometimes life cannot be explained. Finally, only God is Lord, so "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

PROPHETIC THEOLOGY

Read: Amos 5

"I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies."

The prophet Amos is not easy to listen to. We don't like to think about God being angry and judgmental—we much prefer grace-filled messages of comfort. However, prophetic theology holds the conviction that God both judges those who perpetrate wrongdoing, especially oppression against

the vulnerable, and offers grace that abounds. In prophecy, God is communicating in the voice of the prophet who is the spokesperson for God. Prophecy takes us from words of piercing indictment, like Jeremiah's "Your ways and your doings have brought this (disaster) upon you. This is your doom!" to Isaiah's beautiful words of hope, "Comfort, comfort my people, speak tenderly to Jerusalem ..."

Each prophetic book in the Old Testament developed over time throughout the history of ancient Israel, so it is important to understand the context and audience of prophecy. For example, Amos addressed a specific group—the ones who were trampling the poor, building fine houses and pleasant vineyards, taking bribes and pushing aside the needy in the local law courts. In other words, Amos addressed and talked about the powerful and affluent of his time who thought they deserved God's blessing. In a society where there were wide disparities of wealth and power, these were the elite who had land, political influence, and wealth.

It is pretty clear that these people are getting bad news about the consequences of their behaviour. God has judged them for their transgressions against justice and compassion, for their greed and arrogance, for their misplaced religious efforts that miss the mark of true worship. Their attitudes and actions have rightfully earned God's punishment in the form of the destruction of their fortresses, fine houses and vineyards, exile and death that lead to wailing and lamentation in the streets, fields and vineyards.

But Amos has another audience besides the rich and powerful. "Seek the Lord and live, seek good and not evil, hate evil and love good and establish justice." These words addressed everyone, a general call for seeking the highest good in all human relations. This positive and lofty message offers a new opportunity to hear God and do righteousness instead of the same old transgressions. Note that the content of the message is the same: justice and compassion are the standards by which human life should be shaped. However, the tone is different: appealing, persuading, offering God's abundant mercy to those who have gone astray.

While it is obvious that the message in Amos is about justice, another look reveals an underlying theme. The Lord God is either the speaker or is spoken about in almost every verse of the book. The Lord is the God of hosts, Creator of the heavens and earth, and powerful enough to punish wrongdoers. God requires justice and righteousness. The Lord does not delight in empty worship, endless offerings, or solemn assemblies. Rather, God calls, persuades, pleads with people to turn to the good, the just and the right, and offers mercy for those who seek to turn back to righteousness.

And now we can hear what is distinctive about prophetic theology—the insistence that God is deeply and irrevocably involved in human life and in setting values for human decision-making. Prophetic theology is adamant that God knows and cares about people, and how they live and how they treat each other and creation.

Prophets bring a word of judgment for the arrogant who have pursued their own well-being at the expense of the marginalized; a word of hope to those caught in a hopeless situation of oppression or warfare; a word of comfort to those suffering the ravages of political fortune or oppression by the powerful.

Prophetic theology is convinced that God offers a way to live by embracing all of life in God's love, justice and mercy. Humans are called to find their hope in God and in response to "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

We have listened to four distinct witnesses to the faith of our ancestors, written in their lives and words. You can hear common themes in these four theologies, especially that God is sovereign Lord, creator and sustainer of life, who remains involved with humanity. All these theologies also see God's expectations for how humans respond to God and treat each other. However, here the theologies express distinct themes. Covenant theology remembers God's gracious, faithful sal-

vation that calls us to love and act with compassion toward each other. Priestly theology is adamant that God's holiness in the created order means we should live within standards of holiness and purity. Wisdom reflects that God's creation opens us to learning and wise living while humbly recognizing the limits of our understanding. Prophetic words maintain God's constant judgment and mercy which cry out for us to respond with righteousness if we have done wrong, and to respond with hope if we need a word of comfort.

These theological truths echo throughout the Old Testament, woven into the texts developed over the centuries. These truths were the foundation of practice and faith for the first Christians and so they are also woven through New Testament witnesses to Jesus' life, death and resurrection and the life of the early church. From there, these theologies have informed and shaped centuries of Christianity in its wide diversity and finally, they come to inform and shape our lives and faith today. ■

Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls is dean of studies at Vancouver School of Theology. A study guide to this article is available online.

Thank You!

On behalf of the national committees, national office staff, and the entire Presbyterian community, we would like to express our sincerest thanks and appreciation to everyone who has made the 137th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada a success.

In particular, the Local Arrangements Committee and the many volunteers from the Presbytery of London deserve our gratitude for all of their hard work.



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General Assembly Office

The Rev. Richard Fee
Life and Mission Agency

Stephen Roche
Support Services

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca



Dayspring, Edmonton

Things are booming in Alberta: On Palm Sunday, Dayspring welcomed 19 new members—five by profession of faith, one by reaffirmation of faith, and 13 by transfer. Amongst them were four young people and several from the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon. Plus, there were two baptisms. On our website, Cameroonians celebrate!



First, Stellarton, N.S.

First welcomed new members into their church family on Easter Sunday. Pictured (left to right) Robert Bennett, Geraldine Bennett, Elaine Campbell, Shelley Curtis-Thompson and Rev. Charles McPherson.



Albion Gardens, Etobicoke, Ont.

Albion Gardens provides a monthly Toonie Lunch—attendance ranges from 70-85 people who each pay \$2, making the mission self-sustaining. These ladies are the missionaries who prepare the meal.



Calvin, North Bay, Ont.

Calvin hosted Rev. Dr. Richard Topping in March for an excellent and well-attended workshop, Holy Scripture: Artifact, Literature and Living Voice. Seen here, Topping (left) with Rev. David Clark, minister at Calvin. Another photo is online.



Knox Crescent Kensington and First, Montreal

More than a dozen congregations grew and flourished from Rev. John Bethune's mission positing in 1786—the oldest of which would now be 225 years old. Knox Crescent Kensington and First—embedded in the name is the story of Canada, of Montreal and of Presbyterians—a constant mission, a steady presence, an active congregation. This photograph suggests a little of that history: Amy Miyamoto represents the once only-Japanese Presbyterian congregation that worshiped in one of the now amalgamated churches from 1956–78; Margaret Dick represents Knox, which joined Kensington in 1948; Frank Stanway, of Kensington, whose building is home to KCKF today; Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries, current minister; and, Grace Thronley-Brown, originally of First, joined in 1984. Missing from this photo is Jane McJannet, of Melville which joined in 1977. A more detailed history is available online.

Centennial, Calgary

Rev. Helen Smith welcomed a baker's dozen of new members last December to Centennial. And, of course, in true Presbyterian tradition, there was cake: "God Bless our new members."

online extra

ON OUR WEBSITE: Ann Crain, of St. Andrew's, Ottawa, turns 100. She has been worshipping there for 83 years; The church in Petawawa, Ont., serves breakfast to the town; Sunnyside, P.E.I., comes a tumblin' down. It will rise again.



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From the Moderator

When God Blesses Our Little Bit

MIRACLES GROW AND MULTIPLY OUT OF MEAGER BEGINNINGS. BY HERB GALE

WE ARE PROBABLY all familiar with the definition of “parable” that I was taught in Sunday school: “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” That definition certainly fits Jesus’ parable of the mustard seed—for it is all about the God-given potential of a seed when it is planted in the earth. You know the story. Jesus says the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds. Yet when it is sown, it grows to be one of the greatest of all shrubs, with branches so large that birds can make nests in its shade. (Mark 4:30-32) It’s a beautiful image that Jesus paints of how God can take our little bit and turn it into a lot—a whole lot! The Bible is filled with stories of how God takes what we consider insignificant and blesses that little bit and miracles grow and multiply out of those meager beginnings—again and again.

There’s the story of Gideon’s army of 300 men vanquishing the Midianites’ thousands. (Judges 7) Or, of how a handful of meal in a jar and a little jug of oil fed prophet Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. (1 Kings 17:8-16) Or, of course, Jesus feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish from a kid’s lunch, and everyone ate and had enough and they collected 12 baskets of leftovers.

And, the culmination of all the stories—Jesus’ own death on the cross, which is the story of how one man put his little bit into God’s hands and it proved to be enough for

the salvation of the world!

The story of the prayer shawl ministry is the story of a mustard seed growing in amazing ways. In 1998, Janet Bristow and Victoria Galo attended the Women’s Leadership Institute at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. After completing their study, Janet and Victoria wanted to figure out a way to combine the spiritual discipline of prayer with an expression of tangible compassion. And so the idea of the prayer shawl ministry was born and has spread to churches around the world, including many congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Kingdom of God is indeed like a mustard seed!

And I am certain that mustard seed will continue to grow through the invitation I have extended to Presbyterian knitters across Canada to knit prayer shawls for the residents of the Boarding Homes Ministry. That ministry, begun by Rev. Rodger Hunter in 1999 with one boarding home in Toronto, has now grown to 13 homes serving 359 residents. I’d like to present the shawls to Rodger and representatives of his ministry team when they receive the E. H. Johnson award at this year’s General Assembly. I can’t think of a better way to culminate my focus on growing the generosity of the church than through a flood of prayer shawls arriving in time to be presented at General Assembly.

I remember a children’s story I led at Bethel, Scotsburn, N.S. Holding up a small brown bag, I asked the kids if they believed there was enough food in the bag to feed everyone in the sanctuary. They were skeptical until I showed them what was inside: packets of various kinds of seeds—carrots and beans, squash and pumpkins, etc. Then I opened one of the packets and placed a seed in each child’s hand and said what they were holding in their hands was “Potential.” I told the kids, “You are like those seeds.”

“Do you know what that means?” I asked, prompting one little boy to exclaim, “I do! It means I’m small, but I’ve got potential!” And he does ... as do we all!

Jesus is right. The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. I wonder what God can do with your little bit?

For more information on how you can contribute a prayer shawl for the Boarding Homes Ministry, contact Sheryl Sutton, Planned Giving program coordinator, at ssutton@presbyterian.ca or by phone, 1-800-619-7301 ext. 278. ■



Rev. Dr. Herb Gale is associate secretary of Planned Giving for the PCC. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

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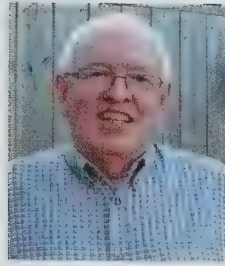
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Obituaries



Kirk, Richard "Dick" Frank, a long-time member of and elder at Hopedale Presbyterian Church, Oakville, Ont., left us too soon in his 72nd year to join the Lord on Jan. 21, 2011. A service of worship in gratitude for the life of Dick was held on Jan. 26, 2011. Dick leaves behind his beloved wife, Alma Kirk (Copp); his sons, Scott (Julie) and Jeff (Christie); sister, Dianne Bauer; and his grandchildren, Nathaniel and Sofia.

Dick loved and served the Church. He was an integral part of Hopedale's life and mission. Over the years, he was everything from a member of Hopedale's session, its treasurer and trustee, a member of the finance and maintenance team, the representative elder at presbytery, to a member and chair of the presbytery pastoral guidance committee. Dick also served on the presbytery nominations committee and on the Assembly Council. Dick's insight and guidance is greatly missed, as is his grace and subtle humour.

His favourite hymn was *To God be the Glory* and he exemplified that in his daily life. Towards the end, Dick told a friend that he could not have gone through his illness without faith and that he was not scared to be with the Lord.

Stewart, Donald Ernest, at the age of 79. Don passed away Aug. 12, 2010 after a valiant struggle with cancer. He is survived by Marilyn, his wife of 50 years; son, Donald Jr. (Nancy) and daughters, Laurie Flainek (Michael) and Cindy Meaden (Tim); along with five grandchildren. He also is survived by sisters, nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his parents and sisters.

As a young man, Don left his beloved New Brunswick and settled into northern Ontario. Don worked for the MNR as super-intendant of provincial parks in the district of Cochrane, retiring after 35 years. A lifelong Presbyterian, Don was an elder at Knox, Cochrane, Ont., for 48 years, 43 years as clerk of session and 42 years as representative elder. For many years Don was the church treasurer and was very active in the work of the board of managers. In addition, Don took care of minor maintenance needs at the church and the manse.

His record of service at Knox will never be equalled. Don is sorely missed by family, friends and all at Knox Church.

Weavers, Robert "Bob" Arthur, faithful member and respected elder of Knox Presbyterian Church, Dundas, Ont., died Feb. 16, 2011. Bob was a kind, caring man of deep faith who served God and his church with dedication, wisdom, humility and grace. ■

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ONLINE THIS MONTH

JUNE 3

JUDITH CHIN: THE BIBLE
PERSECUTING AND YOU

JUNE 17

JEFFREY AND BETH
BULLYING: WHO, WHAT,
WHEN, WHY?

FACTS ABOUT BULLYING
& AN INTERACTIVE
LEARNING GAME:

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BULLYING

WHAT PARENTS OF
YOUNG CHILDREN NEED
TO KNOW:

DRIVING TO
2014 ANNUAL MEETING
BULLYING: HOW TO PREVENT
BULLYING
BULLYING

Hello friends!

I have heard that some of you have been teasing other children at the playground—not just once in a while—but every day. Others have been telling tall tales at school about certain kids and persuading other kids not to hang out with them. *I would call these things bullying.*

As a child I remember running to the top of the town hall steps and shouting, “I’m the king of the castle, and you’re the dirty rascal!” My friends would then try to win the top spot. This game was not allowed at school. Teachers knew that someone could get hurt in the scuffling. Did I feel I was better than anyone else? Did I do it because I had seen it played by older kids? Was it really such a bad thing? It was just a game, right? Let me think about it.

Now I have remembered something important that Jesus said that helps me choose how I live every day:

“In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.”

(Matthew 7:12)

We need to encourage each other to be firm in our faith. Until next time, stay brave and strong. Show love in everything you do. Treat others as you want them to treat you.

Blessings to you,
Jennifer



SUBMIT your questions, comments and thoughts like Emma did at www.presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder or on our discussion forum in the coming months.

Hache. But when I was a kid some 50 years ago, we seldom saw Canada geese anywhere. Sometimes, in the spring and in the fall, a few would straggle through on their way to wherever it was they wintered or nested. But large flocks that nested right on your doorstep, raised their young on your lawn and greased the dickens out of every beach and patch of lush grass in the area, living 10 months out of every 12 as full-time residents; no, not ever.

Authorities tell us that the resident Canada goose population has increased five times since 1975.

treasurer and business manager, left to answer a call to another rural ministry in the Lloydminster area of Alberta. Both Charles and Shannon had been, in various capacities and ways, a crucial part of our mission team for going on eight years.

Their leaving meant we have had to radically alter our mission strategy and practice in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region, which makes up about one-fifth of mainland British Columbia. Some house churches have had to be terminated, some worship times have had to be shifted, some pastoral work

care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:10-13)

If the changes we are facing in the Presbyterian Church and in its mission fields are going to truly

The Canada goose on my doorstep seems to be telling me that attitude is key. Does change mean misfortune or does it mean opportunity?

According to a June 2008 story in the *Vancouver Sun*, the Canada goose now has the capacity to double its population every five years. That is a pretty greasy geesey proposition. Why the capacity for that kind of increase? There are many complex biological answers to that question but the short answer is that the Canada goose is a master at mastering change. As the landscape has been radically changed by an increasing human population filling in swamps and replacing them with grassed-in lawns, parks, airport runways, freeway meridians and even hay fields, the Canada goose has simply approached the change as an opportunity. Its swamps may have been filled in, but hey, 'what's wrong with a newly mown lawn?'

The Canada goose is truly a master at mastering change. Right now I feel like I need to sit at the feet of a goose and learn from it. In the Presbyterian Church in Canada and in the rural mission field that Linda and I serve, we are facing massive change. Not only is the rural human population and their social and economic circumstances changing all around us, but internally we are facing massive changes too. About a year ago Charles McNeil, one of my partners in mission and his spouse Shannon Finley, our church

dramatically altered, some mission practices changed. In addition to the changes in the mission field, in the mission team, and in our mission practice, our mission support has dropped off considerably, especially from congregations and sacrificially for many years with their regular love gifts. This reality has meant we have not sought a replacement for Charles and Shannon. Hopefully this is a temporary thing but if financial changes continue, more changes will have to be made. And we are just a microcosm of the whole denomination. How do we as a whole church, how do we as a mission field, approach and deal with all of this change?

To be honest, as to the specifics, I am still not sure. The Canada goose on my doorstep seems to be telling me that attitude is key. Does change mean misfortune or does it mean opportunity?

As I contemplate this, I find my mind gently being turned by the Spirit to the apostle Paul. If ever there was a missionary who greeted change as opportunity, Paul was the master. At one point, facing some of the same kind of changes I have alluded to in this story, Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi: "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your

be seen as opportunity, the reality that bracketed all of Paul's life and work—"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"—will have to be our reality too. The rural mission fields that Linda and I and our partners Jon and Shannon work in are truly 'ripe unto harvest,' all 100,000 square kilometres of them in the Cariboo Chilcotin region, which though huge is only a pittance in size compared to Paul's mission field of all of Asia Minor. And yet Paul's ability to embrace change as opportunity—"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"—resulted in the gospel being preached throughout his huge mission field, and beyond it to the whole of the Roman Empire, which was eventually converted to Christianity. When the fields are the focus, and the sufficiency of Christ the experienced reality, the harvest is a forgone conclusion. ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



Change is Opportunity

A LESSON FROM A GOOSE AND AN APOSTLE.

BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

AYEEEEEEEE! HAAAAYAHOOOOO!

Blamn, blam, blamidy blamn blamn! Three blonds crested the hill, two running flat out as fast as their short legs could carry them; the third, game but somewhat slower, hollering blue murder with six-shooters blazing. This was not a scene from the latest rerun of a John Wayne cowboy movie on TV. It was from a recent scene viewed from my front deck. The three blonds were my wife and her two Labrador retrievers. The blazing six-shooters were my grandson's cap pistols. The object of the armed charge was an armada of Canada geese that had sailed into port and clambered ashore for a lawn party.

The armada of geese gently lifted off the lawn and flapped twice before setting back down on the lake 20 metres off shore. They turned to glare and wag their stubby tails. Linda continued to berate them and shake her fists and pistols. Buddy and Addy, hunting dogs to the bitter end, were sweeping the lawn with their noses down looking for the latest droppings to delightfully lap up like candy. Why do Labs like to eat everything that stinks?

This scene is a relatively new thing in these parts. By new I don't mean in the last year. Linda has been carrying on her war with the Canada geese every summer for the past 21 years that we have lived on the shores of Lac La

continued on page 49



WEST VANCOUVER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BY REV. JANE SWATRIDGE

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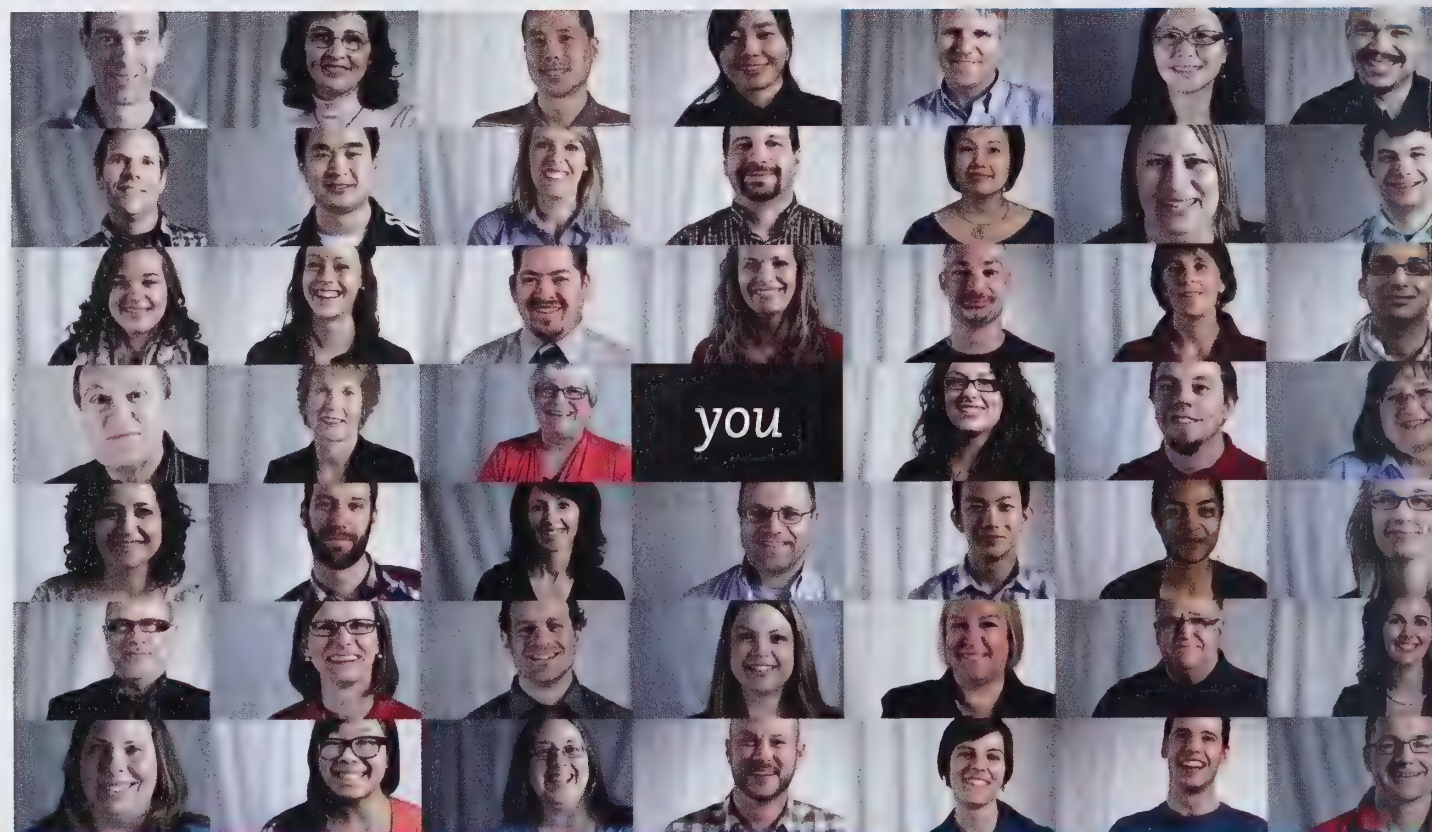
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Images submitted by Jean Lawrence



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JULY/AUGUST 2011

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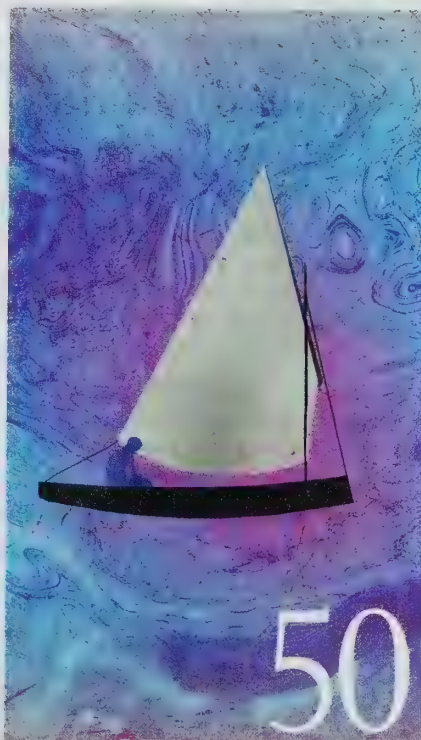
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THE 137TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Impressions of a Time ^{not} Well Spent

BY GLEN DAVIS

To borrow a phrase:

I did not insert the word 'not' above, and I don't know who did!

Actually, much of the week was well spent, in spite of the hot, humid weather, the endless chicken meals and the occasional commissioner who felt that he or she must express an opinion on every "little" item on the docket.

There was that magnificent sermon on opening night by the outgoing moderator, Herb Gale. His compelling challenge to "jump into the cool, refreshing river of God's abundant grace and splash around" was an invitation hard to resist. Then there was the excellent leadership of Rick Horst, the new moderator, as he guided the assembly through some rocky rapids with efficiency and good humour.

This year there seemed to be less of that rancorous right/left theological division than in other years. It was still there but it was expressed with respect for the other's opinion and with a welcome generosity of spirit—for the most part. During discussion on the wording of a statement about our church's relationship with the Jewish people, which called us "to reach out in friendship and hospitality" to Jewish neighbours, a commissioner moved to insert the words "and with prayerful witness."

This gave rise to spirited debate on what constituted "prayerful witness." Some of us saw these as code words for "converting the Jews" which seemed to be out of place in a public statement that would be shared with Jewish sisters and brothers. The amendment was narrowly defeated in the assembly's only standing vote.

Assembly made one decision that could have far-reaching implications for our theology of the ministry of word and sacraments. This is the ministry to which ministers have always been ordained in our church. But this assembly decided to permit presbyteries, in special circumstances, to commission a properly trained ruling elder or a member of the Order of Diaconal Ministries to administer the Sacrament of Holy Communion. This, of course, is a change to the law of the church so it must be sent to presbyteries for their vote. I welcome this change because it provides a means for folk in remote areas to receive the nourishment of the sacrament on a regular basis; but stay tuned for some confusion over what the ordination of ministers is all about.

The assembly's response to the cry from Palestinian Christians, known as the Kairos Palestine Document, was keenly debated. This debate reflected the difference of opinion on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that exists

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in Canadian society and around the world. But in the end the assembly wisely, I thought, decided to respond as one body of Christians writing to another, not fully agreeing with them but expressing Christian solidarity.

If there was one issue at this assembly that defined the struggle that we find ourselves in as a denomination, it was the lack of a comprehensive vision for the church, which prevents us from setting clear priorities

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.7, JULY/AUGUST 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

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ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.
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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634
Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.
Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government
of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF)
for our publishing activities.

Subscription rates. GST/HST not included.

Every Home Plan: \$19.50

Individual: \$29.50

U.S.A. and foreign: \$39 **Single copies:** \$3.95

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and leaves us stuck with a national structure that claims to give priority to the needs of congregations but is built on an anachronistic Christendom model that is no longer suitable in a post-Christendom era. This was evident in three overtures that called for restructuring of the national organization. Each of them referred to the decline in membership and the loss of congregations, and the need for the national structure to focus money and staff on the renewal and resourcing of congregations. This was a cry for help, but it gave the impression that if we just get the structure right our churches will be rescued. Of course that is not true, but it does indicate that the church out there expects a level of help from the national structure that it is not getting now.

The dilemma for the national organization is how to respond to this cry at the very time when contributions to Presbyterians Sharing are declining. The Life and Mission Agency tried to meet this impossible challenge by a merging of departments into a peculiarly named office called Canadian Ministries/The Vine.

Commissioners attempted to address those overtures by asking for a special committee to take on the task of visioning and restructuring. In the end the assembly decided to leave this task to the body that is supposed to be doing it—the Assembly Council. My conviction is that we must now do what we should have done 20 years ago; that is, imagine that we have no national structure in place, start from scratch and design a structure that will meet the realities of today

and stop trying to fit a round peg into a square hole by rearranging things at Wynford Drive.

Such are my random impressions here on the last day of assembly. We probably could have done in two days what we took five days to do, but hey, we would have missed all those chicken meals.

We are a gifted and struggling church, but the river of God's grace flows in abundance, so hope is the main item on the docket. And honestly, I don't know who inserted the "not" above. ■

Rev. Dr. Glen Davis is a former general secretary at national offices and a past moderator. He is retiring this year from serving as the Presbyterian director of Denominational Formation at the Vancouver School of Theology.

David Harris will return in the September issue.

Summer Directory

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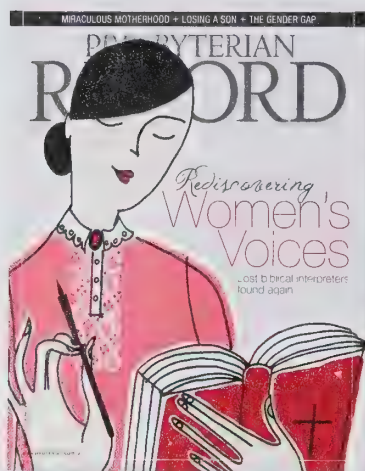
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Letters



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Salvation is Membership

Re Members for Eternity, March

The authors write: "While a baptized person without formal membership in a congregation is still a part of the body of Christ ...".

It has nothing to do with formal membership or baptism, but with salvation.

GARY SHIELDS, CAPE BRETON, N.S.

Basic and Essential Building Block

Re Through Prayer and Action, Letters, March, and Seconding a Sentiment, May

I read with interest the exchange between Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg and Mr. Bill Ashby both online and in the pages of the *Record*, and I enjoyed Andrew Donaldson's reflection.

As convener of a task force charged with reviewing the health and vitality of congregations within the Presbytery of Hamilton, I have found myself more and more in sympathy with Dr. Kouwenberg's call for more attention to be paid, and more support given, to the renewal and development of the church at the congregational level. My frustration, echoing Kouwenberg's, has been to find such attention and support almost disappearing from the national agenda and budget just when it is most needed. At the same time, I have discovered in other denominations a growing emphasis (and spending) on support for congregational renewal that seems lacking in our own.

There are, of course, flashes of light in what sometimes seems a uniformly gloomy scenario of church decline. As we have discovered in Hamilton, there is a deep hunger for renewal in many of our congregations, and the Emmaus Project has been a catalyst for vision and hope. However, as their website declares, the Emmaus Project is focused

on the renewal and transformation of presbyteries, which coordinator Harry Klassen describes as "the basic building blocks" of our church.

While presbyteries are certainly integral to Presbyterian governance, surely the local congregation is the basic and essential building block of any church. If so, then it becomes a clear priority for the national church to devote more time, attention and resources to the task of supporting the local congregation in becoming what theologian Otto Weber called "an outpost of the Kingdom of God, placed in a particular spot in the world to bear witness to the Lordship of Christ."

REV. THOMAS J. KAY, HAMILTON, ONT.

Beyond Feminist and Masculinist

Re It's All About Relationships, May

Thank you for your call for more women's voices, and the welcome focus on relationships. But I take issue with your blanket statement that "the halls of academia are still dominated by male theologians." This might be true of some halls, but I am happy to say that I work in one hall where that characterization is patently false. In the Vancouver School of Theology, the Principal and Professor of Church History is a woman; the Dean of Studies and Professor of Hebrew Bible is a woman; two professors of theology are women; the Professor of Liturgical Studies and Christian Ethics is a woman; the head of the Public and Pastoral Ministry program is a woman; the Director of Theological Field Education and the registrar are women.

There are also five men on the faculty. Theology here is neither "feminist" nor "masculinist;" it is theology, in all its beauty and complexity.

I am about to retire after five years of working with these fine colleagues who are all dedicated to the vital task of teaching and doing theology in an open, inclusive and caring community where relationships are given a primary place. Perhaps your judgment

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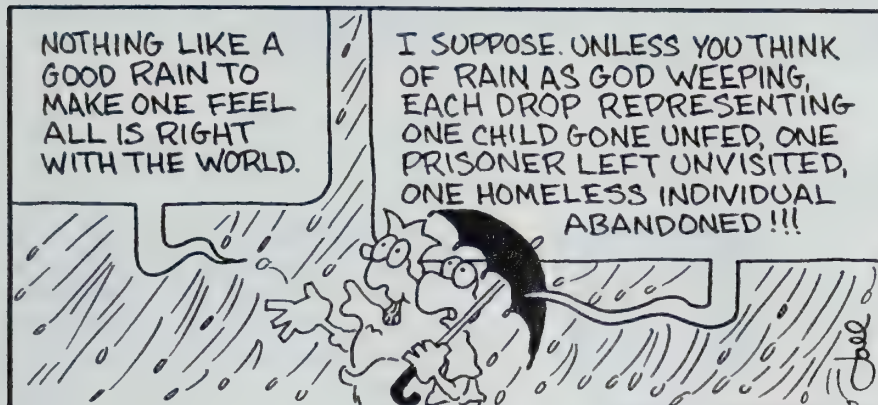
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of academic halls is a little out of date!
REV. DR. GLEN DAVIS, VANCOUVER

Editor Responds:

Glen, thank you for covering for me as an editorialist this month. And while I am pleased VST, Knox College, Toronto, and Presbyterian College, Montreal, prove me wrong, I think as far as blanket statements go, mine is probably a little more true than not.

Add Anna Ross to the List

Re Rediscovering Women's Voices, May

The significant work Nancy Calvert-Koyzis and others are doing in bringing to light 'the work of historical female interpreters' of the Bible is to be celebrated. To the list of women who engaged in the study and explication of the biblical text should be added the Canadian Presbyterian, Anna Ross (1848-1933).

Anna (Duncan) Ross was widowed in 1887 when her husband, Rev. John Ross of Brucefield, Ont., died. She raised her five children while writing six books and numerous articles. Her *The New Covenant: A Lost Secret* grew out of a debate she had with Dr. J. Edgar McFayden, professor of Old Testament at Knox College, about the meaning of the covenant. Ross was the first principal of Ewart College, and was a frequent speaker at Women's Foreign Missionary Society gatherings.

In the wake of The Komagata Maru tragedy, in 1914, she mounted a biblical defense for Canada having a more open immigration policy. In the 1920's she published a commentary on the book of Revelation that engaged some of the biblical scholars of her time. Following Church Union in 1925, she was often the preacher in the Presbyterian congregation in Strasbourg, Sask., where she then lived.

I look forward to the discovery of more Canadian women's voices among the historical interpreters of the Bible.

REV. PETER BUSH, WINNIPEG

Sad, Disappointed, Hopeful

Re U.S. Presbyterians to Allow Ordination of Homosexuals, June

I find it sad that the U.S. Presbyterian Church has seen fit to pervert the word of God by accepting practicing homosexual ministers. The Bible clearly and unequivocally condemns homosexual acts (Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10, etc.). The Christian approach to modern-day homosexuality must distinguish between the respect due to persons and the necessary repudiation of any exalted ideology of homosexuality.

PAUL KOKOSKI, HAMILTON, ONT.

I rejoice with our American brothers and sisters in this decision. It is with a hopeful

heart that I pray that the Presbyterian Church in Canada will demonstrate similar wisdom, clarity and grace soon. I am disappointed that the recent overture to the General Assembly was not entertained and that we are so far behind our brothers and sisters to the south.

DARLENE MCLEOD, ONLINE

Not just the Americans. The Church of Scotland has voted to allow gay ministers (*Guardian*, May 23, 2011).

Might it be time to discuss the possibility of gay clergy in the Presbyterian Church in Canada? Perhaps.

REV. ELDON HAY, SACKVILLE, N.S.

Corrections:

Re People and Places, June

Our apologies to the good folks in Summerside, P.E.I., whose church was razed to rise again. We were confused by your sunny disposition.

Re Moose on a Mission, News, June

We incorrectly identified the congregation in the photo on page 13. It should have read St. David's, St. John's. We regret the error. ■

online extra

LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED SO MORE VOICES CAN BE SHARED. THE COMPLETE TEXT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE:
PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA

Frustrated Visions

MUTED SCREAMS FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY. BY ANDREW FAIZ

'Vision' is an awkward word. We know what it means, or think we know what it means, but rarely use it properly. 'Visioning,' the verb extraction, is even worse. 'A vision statement,' which is part of an institution's strategic plan, is a statement of what that institution will look like in the future. These all spring from the 'to see' verb and what we mean of them is 'to discern a future direction.' It is code for a hopeful plan.

'Vision,' 'visioning,' and 'vision statement' were often used at this year's General Assembly. What the speakers often meant—and I am putting words into people's mouths here—is that they were deeply dissatisfied with merging departments or shaving budgets; that they wanted a bold statement to tell them what the Presbyterian Church in Canada will look like in five, 10 or 25 years; and a roadmap to suggest how to get there.

Adding another layer to the awkwardness: Commissioners were looking, in part, for senior bureaucrats to sit down and do some analysis and present a plan for the coming future, which will show trends, and present options, which are Christ-driven, filled with the Spirit and working for the Kingdom of God. If our church is ageing and membership is fading, then please tell us how we can serve the kingdom!

Of course, within our polity, the rules of engagement state it is the courts and committees of our church that answer these questions. The bureaucrats merely manage what they are told by assembly. And so the frustration grows and we use vague words like 'visioning,' and the tension grows between commissioners and paid staff. You can hear that frustration in Rev.



Dr. Glen Davis' opinion piece at the beginning of this issue.

Amongst Davis' many different roles over half a century are general secretary and moderator of assembly.

IF OUR CHURCH
IS AGEING AND
MEMBERSHIP IS FADING,
THEN PLEASE TELL US
HOW WE CAN SERVE
THE KINGDOM!

He's been-there-done-that and is able to give it voice. And while he has not been at assembly as a commissioner the past few years, the frustration he names has been growing incrementally for a while. He has tapped into the collective voice—that mystical and mysterious thing that envelops a court and is passed on year to year.

It was this unnamed frustration that hung over this year's assembly. Presbyteries are closing churches, congregations are worried and national office is tightening staffing. But these are all merely responses to numbers—of decreasing people and dollars. Someplace behind all this is a silent cry:

Lead us from this wilderness.

Many branches of the church are working on discernment. There was the Emmaus Project; and I encourage you to visit presbyterian.ca/emmaus. A lot of wisdom there by a lot of wise people.

Three presbyteries I have visited—Kingston, Barrie and Westminster—are amongst others to have workshops to determine their uncertain future. Many congregations are going through similar exercises.

There is a long history of women's leadership which dates back to the moment the empty tomb was discovered. I wonder if the May long weekend conference hosted by the Women's Missionary Society and the Atlantic Mission Society is another example; the WMS and AMS returned to their mission roots by raising issues that matter in the world today. (The *Record's* September issue is dedicated to the conference.)

The financially struggling Cariboo Church led an elder's conference in Grande Prairie, Alta., recently and the *Record* will report on it in January.

All these efforts towards discernment are lacking a centralized focus. That was the unnamed beast roaming through assembly in London. 'We're trying,' was the muted scream: 'We're trying but we don't have the expertise; or we have the expertise and nobody is listening. We need leadership.'

The frustration in London was as physical as the hopefulness was at the WMS/AMS conference. Time will tell, it always does, which way we're headed. I pray it happens before our vision completely fades. ■

Andrew Faiz is the *Record's* managing editor.

Toronto Church Shares \$200,000 with Missions

BEQUEST MAKES DONATIONS POSSIBLE. BY CONNIE PURVIS

ST. ANDREW'S, TORONTO, decided to share \$200,000 this summer when a large bequest to the church came in the midst of a lean season among the city's missions.

"The money is the congregation's to distribute," said Rev. Will Ingram, lead minister at the iconic downtown church. "With the economic downturn in recent years, some organizations, especially in the Toronto area, have felt the crunch. But the needs continued."

Thanks to the work of the outreach, and finance and stewardship committees, session decided to parcel out a total of \$200,000 to nine groups with whom the congregation and its members had a relationship.

Toronto's Evangel Hall, a large street mission, and Knox College in support of a fund to establish a chair of Pastoral Theology, each received \$50,000.

The remainder was divided among Boarding Homes Ministry, recipient of this year's E. H. Johnson award for cutting-edge mission, Portland Place, a non-profit housing corporation, Flemingdon Gateway Mission, which provides after school programs and leadership training for residents of the city's Flemingdon Park neighbourhood, the George Vais Adult Christian Education Fund, which provides funding for Christian education opportunities, Presbyterian World Service and Development, the national church's relief and development arm, Armagh, a shelter for abused women and children in Mississauga, Ont., and Out of the Cold, a program that helps feed and shelter the homeless during the winter.



A \$50,000 donation from St. Andrew's, Toronto, is presented to Knox College to help fund a chair in Pastoral Theology. Pictured are: Rev. William Ingram, senior minister at St. Andrew's; Dorcas Gordon, principal of Knox College; John Matheson, convener of the board of managers at St. Andrew's; Dr. Stephanie Ling, convener of the Knox College Board of Governors; Rev. Dr. Robert Faris, associate minister at St. Andrew's; Ms. Fiona Smith, convener of outreach ministry at St. Andrew's.

"I know what these other organizations need, and we have lots of needs, too," said John Matheson, an elder and chair of the board of managers. "We're spending a lot of money on restoring our building, which was in bad shape. But you can't keep everything for yourself. Personally, I was brought up to think about tithing, and that certainly was on

my mind when I talked to session about this. I think generally the congregation and session feel very proud we're able to do this, and we've had some fine reactions from the people who are recipients. It seemed to be the right time and was needed." ■

Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.

Community News

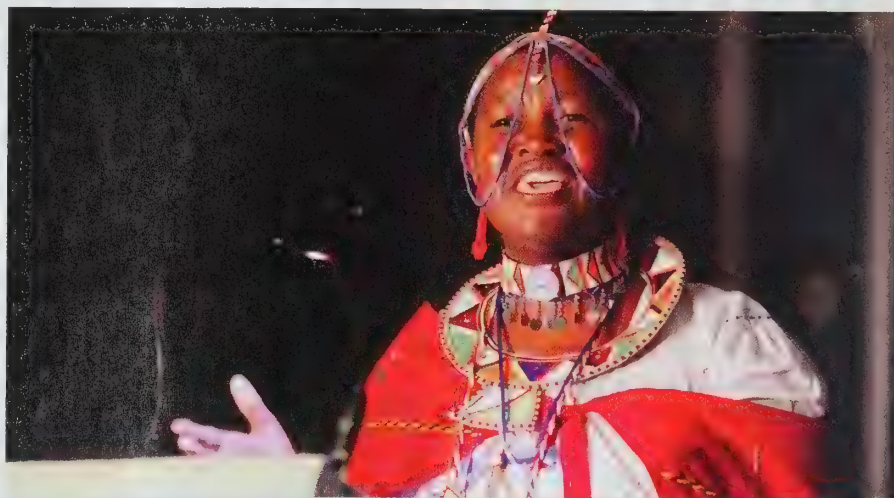
Women's Gathering a Success

THE INTERNATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN Women's Gathering drew about 550 participants from across Canada and around the globe for four days of workshops, worship and guest speakers. Held over the May long-weekend, the first-time event was hosted by the Atlantic Mission Society and the Women's Missionary Society. Women from every province were in attendance, but it was St. Timothy's, Toronto, that led the contingent with 25 women at the conference.

"It is a huge relief that the event went generally very well," said Sarah Kim, executive director of the WMS. "I am also sad that an event that was planned and prepared for the past two years has ended ... On that note, however, it is highly likely there will be another Women's Gathering in three years' time, although the official decision is yet to be made."

Guest speaker Dr. Margaret Somerville of McGill University spoke twice; first on the ethical considerations of religion in the public square, and later on "designer" babies and biological parenthood. The closing banquet featured Stevie Cameron, a member of St. Andrew's, King Street, Toronto, responsible for starting the church's Out of the Cold program, and an award-winning writer whose most recent book explores the stories of the women killed by Robert Pickton in British Columbia. Cameron became almost teary-eyed as she related the details of their lives and revealed how close she had become to the tightly-knit community in Vancouver's notorious lower east side.

At Sunday worship, a celebratory offering was led by visitors from



Veronica Muchiri, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, speaks at the Women's Gathering.

churches in Africa. Participants danced their offering to the front amidst singing and clapping to benefit a Presbyterian World Service and Development girls' education program in Afghanistan. Nearly \$15,000 was raised.

A complete report will appear in the September issue. ■—AM

St. Andrew's Hall Leases Land

ST. ANDREW'S HALL sits at the heart of the University of British Columbia, a campus located near the waterfront in a city known for the most expensive real estate market in the country.

The Presbyterian college plans to cash in on its prime Vancouver location by subleasing a piece of land to become the site of a 15-story apartment building. The Hall expects to receive about \$3.5 million in the deal, although some elements have yet to be approved by UBC.

Those funds will help replace one of the Hall's current buildings with a new administration and worship building, likely to cost about \$1.5 million, and will provide a stipend for

a new director of campus ministries.

The hope, according to Principal Stephen Farris, is to build a permanent worshipping community in the heart of a secular campus.

"In a situation like ours, we need to be a centre of mission," he said. "And my hope is to find out if we can have a permanent group of people worshipping God and learning about ministry. A group that sees itself as a mission."

This will be the second time the Hall has subleased some of its property to augment its programs. Proceeds from a similar arrangement in 2006 created a chair for Studies in the Reformed Tradition, now occupied by Rev. Dr. Richard Topping.

According to David Jennings, chair of the St. Andrew's Hall board, one of the main challenges was finding a developer willing to take on many of the risks associated with the project, and willing to look for long-term rather than immediate gains. The apartment tower will cost about \$40 million to build, he observed. "The developer [Concert Properties]

won't break even until probably year eight. So they're looking eight to 30 years down the road."

The Hall's property was originally leased from UBC on a 999-year term, which expires in 2956. The two subleases expire at the same time, in 94 years.

"To whom much is given, much is asked," Farris noted. "We have been given much." ■—C.Purvis

PWS&D Project is Tops

AN ARTICLE IN *FOREIGN POLICY* magazine has highlighted a project run by Presbyterian World Service and Development and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank as a best example of how to help end hunger. The author, Raj Patel, asks the question, can the world feed 10 billion people? (The projected population by the year 2100.) He explores three theories on how to do this, pointing to the Soils, Food and Healthy Communities Project in Malawi, which is implemented by PWS&D and funded by the Foodgrains Bank, as the best chance for success.

"These programs succeed, in part,

because they don't see hunger as the consequence of a surfeit of peasants or a deficit in soil, but as the result of complex environmental, social, and political causes," writes Patel.

The participatory, ecological approach to agriculture that is a hallmark of the project not only betters farming techniques and ups output, but improves soil quality and nutrition, and does so by focusing on small-scale farmers, especially women.

"Local farmers' knowledge and participation is key for Malawi to feed itself," PWS&D's director, Ken Kim, told the *Record*. "In partnership with the Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi and with the inquisitive mind of Rachel Bezner-Kerr, a Canadian Presbyterian, our initiative that began with 40 marginalized farmers has grown to over 4,000 farmers who continue to share the benefits of the program with their neighbours.

"This holistic program looks at types of crops, soil conservation and diet in tackling hunger. Communities are empowered and local capacity is strengthened."

To read the full article, visit foreignpolicy.com. ■—AM

Self Wins Award for Record Feature

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD contributor Jayne Self has won a Word Guild award of merit for her article, "Ghana: Boogie to the Front," which appeared in the January 2010 issue of the *Record*.

"Our 2009 moderatorial trip to Ghana was a life changing experience for [my husband] Harvey and I," said Self, who is married to former moderator, Rev. Harvey Self. "I greatly appreciate the opportunity the *Record* provided for me to share some of my pictures and stories from our trip. To have my piece commended by the Word Guild is piling blessing upon blessing."

Self's first novel, *Caught Dead*, was published serially on the *Record's* website. Her latest novel, *Murder in Hum Harbour: A Seaglass Mystery*, will be released in October by White Rose/Harbourlight Publishers and will be available in print or e-book format.

The Word Guild is a non-denominational network of Christian writers and editors in Canada. ■—EW

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make him
an offer
he can't
refuse!"

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Church Mourns Death of Servant Minister

REV. DR. ARTHUR VAN SETERS, 1934-2011. BY ANDREW FAIZ

ARTHUR VAN SETERS, the only person to have served as a teacher and senior administrator at all three of the Presbyterian Church's seminaries, passed away in May. He was 77.

Moderator of the 125th General Assembly, in 1999, Van Seters was born in Bronte, Ont., and ordained in 1965. He served as minister at Port Elgin, Sackville and Dorchester, N.B., and at St. Lambert, Que. In 1974 he became executive director of the Montreal Institute for Ministry at McGill University, Montreal. In 1983, he was appointed the third principal of the Vancouver School of Theology. He was also principal of Knox College, from which he retired with the title principal emeritus.

Van Seters and his wife of more than half a century, Rowena (nee Elliott) had been members of Armour Heights, Toronto, since 1993. Rev. Bill Middleton, of Armour Heights, referred to Van Seters as a servant minister. Middleton told several stories of how Van Seters sought to help members of the congregation, including planting and pruning a garden for an invalided lady.

The theme was echoed in many ways. Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll, speaking at the funeral held at Knox College, quoted one of Van Seters' doctoral students: "I think what stands out for me about Art and his contributions to the academic community is that he was always a pastor first. Great administrator, excellent teacher but he always held the hearts and souls of the students above their intellects or the myriad of details that come with administration. He was genuine and generous in his pastoral care."

Rev. Dr. Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, reflected on his friend and colleague at the



Rev. Dr. Arthur Van Seters.

'He was always a pastor first. Great administrator, excellent teacher but he always held the hearts and souls of the students above their intellects'

funeral. "A grateful church gives thanks to the Giver and Sustainer of All Life for the life of Art Van Seters. When he spoke on issues of justice, it was as though we were in the presence of a prophet who had communed with the 'still small voice of God,'" Fee said.

Van Seters had an abiding passion for social justice and was deeply committed to Presbyterian World Service and Development. One of his last public acts was to convene the PWS&D committee two weeks before his death. "He was a mentor, colleague and friend to many drawn to him by his

grace-filled character. He embodied the best of what a follower of Jesus should be. His unflinching commitment to the ministry of PWS&D to the last days of his life revealed his sense of passion and understanding that the gospel must be practiced in both word and deed," Ken Kim, director of PWS&D, told the *Record*.

Van Seters wrote several books on ethics and on preaching. He was also president of the Academy of Homiletics. "As a scholar," McCarroll said, "Art was a true minister of the church, a servant of Christ—bringing his whole being to bear to the challenge of the gospel for the living of the days. For his presence among us, for his call to the church and academy, for his relentless passion, hospitality and robust thought, for all of who he was among us we are profoundly grateful. Thanks be to God. Amen."

Upon his retirement Van Seters vowed to honour his wife, Rowena, who had supported him through his many career adventures, by cooking every meal till death do them part. And he did, avowed his son David at the funeral. Rowena and Art were high school sweethearts; they had five sons.

Van Seters was an avid gardener; he particularly loved impatiens, which he germinated in his basement. He also sculpted rocks and driftwood; a book of his art was produced by his sons.

The last thing Van Seters published in the *Record* was a post-chemotherapy version of Psalm 23. It closed as it opened, with an affirmation of God: "Your covenant goodness and mercy have become my constant companions and I will forever travel in your presence." ■

Andrew Faiz is the *Record's* managing editor.



Banner Train Rolls into Ottawa Katharine Masterton (left) and Stephen Allen of the PCC's Justice Ministries met Kairos supporters at Union Station in Toronto in June before heading to Parliament Hill for Kairos' banner campaign, celebrating Canada's endorsement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Reconciliation Works

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION works, Tom Childs told staff at national offices in June. A descendent of Scottish Travellers, known derogatorily as "gypsies," Childs has also worked with Roma communities in Eastern Europe. In his presentation, Truth and Reconciliation in the World Today, he cited many reconciliation success stories:

In 2005, reconstruction was completed on the cathedral in Dresden, Germany, which had been destroyed by allied bombs during World War Two. Members of the Coventry Cathedral in England, which was also destroyed by German bombs in the same war, participated in the reconstruction ceremony. Childs described former pilots from both countries who sat holding hands throughout the service.

In 1998, Poland established the Institute of National Remembrance to "effectively and truthfully look at their past," Childs reported. In 2012, with the blessing of the Jewish community, Poland will open the Museum of the History of the Polish Jews on the site of the former Warsaw ghetto.

A report at the 2011 Church of Scotland's General Assembly urged the church to examine its past attitudes toward Scottish Travellers and Roma. Childs deemed the report a good first step.

"We need to look and reflect on our own life and journey, our family

history and our walk as disciples and ambassadors of Christ," he said. ■—EW

Presbyterian Plans Royals' Visit

KEVIN MACLEOD has been busy. For months he has travelled across Canada, mapping out the hundreds of details involved in the summer visit of Prince William and his new wife, Kate.

As the Queen's Canadian secretary and chief organizer of the tour, MacLeod, a member at St. James, Big Bras d'Or, N.S., is responsible for making sure the royal visit goes off without a hitch—something he has been doing since 1987.

MacLeod's career began as a tour guide on Parliament Hill, but he eventually landed a position as chief of protocol with the Department of Canadian Heritage (then the Department of the Secretary of State).

Impressed with his service during her visits, the Queen made him a member of the Royal Victorian Order, an order of knighthood recognizing those who have served the sovereign with distinction. She later promoted him to Commander, the highest rank before official knighthood.

MacLeod's Scottish Presbyterian roots run deep in Cape Breton's soil. He says it was there he was taught to "be loyal to my country, my sovereign and my God," although growing up, he never thought he would serve his sovereign in person. ■—C. Purvis



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World News

The Church Has Much Work to Do

GLOBAL CONFERENCE
EXPLORES INJUSTICE AND
BARRIERS TO PEACE.

BY JANELLE YANISHEWSKI

GROWING UP IN a rural congregation in northern Alberta and now attending a church in Toronto has allowed me to experience the Presbyterian Church in a variety of settings. My recent experience at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica gave me a new image of the Christian faith that is bigger than the PCC; an image of a global church that is based upon humanity and similarity.

The conference broke down the denominational barriers that often divide rather than unite the church. As a young adult steward, I worked with other young adults from around the world who came from various backgrounds and denominations. Although we were not always in perfect harmony, conflicts usually stemmed from differing personalities and never created situations where friendship was lost. Ecumenism may test and try, but the value of the community created is worth the struggle. The church is meant to be united. We share common goals according to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and working together we can reach farther and do more.

The IEPCC was hosted by the World Council of Churches in May, celebrated the end of the Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2011), and discussed the role of churches in building a more peaceful world. As a young adult steward, I spent most of my time handing out headsets, giving directions,



The author with new friend, Emmanuel, another young adult steward, from Ghana.

answering questions and assisting where needed. The conference culminated in a final message to be sent to the WCC's General Assembly in Busan, South Korea in 2013; the document is available online.

The convocation focused on four areas: peace in the community, peace in the marketplace, peace with the earth and peace among the peoples. The gathering caused me to reflect on the role of the church and the ecumenical community in issues of justice and peace, and where we are complicit in maintaining systems of injustice that hold us all back from living in a peaceful world.

In Canada, the church and nation have been actively involved in the injustices toward aboriginal peoples. Though residential schooling no longer exists, the legacy of these actions and many others remain, and the legacy has failed to be adequately addressed. Apologizing and reconciling is positive but until it is matched with equitable opportunities, the injustice continues.

We work against peace by the way

we conduct ourselves within a "free" market that maintains a system where the global North profits at the expense of the global South; where locally the poor get poorer and the rich get richer. We fail to be at peace with the earth as we waste energy heating large and often poorly insulated buildings, fail to enact recycling and composting programs, and show a lack of ambition to mitigate the negative impact we have on the environment. We actively discriminate and build injustice into our communities when we discredit homosexuals who feel the call to ministry but find the church blocking their way.

It continues to be a challenge to exist in an earthly world with such different systems than those of heaven. The church is a wonderful place and does good work, but it has more work to do in the fight towards greater justice and peace. ■

Janelle Yanishewski attends Thornhill, Toronto, but grew up attending Knox, Wanham, Alta. For more on the IEPCC, visit overcomingviolence.org.

Kirk Discusses Gay Clergy

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, which has been threatened with schism since it confirmed the appointment of an openly homosexual minister two years ago, voted at its General Assembly to move toward the acceptance of gay and lesbian candidates for ordination.

Members of the assembly, who met in Edinburgh in May, voted by 351 to 294 to "consider further the lifting of the moratorium on acceptance for training and ordination of persons in a same-sex relationship."

The ban was put in place in 2009 following the church's appointment of Scott Rennie, who was living with a male partner. A special commission explored the issue, and the recommendation for further examination of the matter was in the commission's report to assembly.

The assembly also voted to allow ministers and deacons in same-sex relationships ordained before 2009 to remain in the church and move parishes if they wished.

"A theological commission will be set up to bring recommendations to the 2013 General Assembly, as well as considering whether ministers should have freedom of conscience to bless civil partnerships and the possible liturgy for such occasions," the church said in a statement.

Rev. Sharon Ferguson, chief executive of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, said, "We welcome this significant step forward towards a fully inclusive church and acknowledge the work of One Kirk in this respect."

According to the London-based LGCM, one in five members of the Kirk have threatened to leave if lesbian and gay people can be ordained.

This follows a decision made by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to change the church's constitution to allow willing presbyteries and governing bodies to ordain openly gay men and lesbian women as elders, deacons and ministers. The amend-

ment takes affect July 10.

The Church of England, meanwhile, has issued a set of "legal guidelines" entitled "Choosing Bishops," that pave the way for openly (though celebrate) gay clergy to become bishops.

The new guidelines aim to bring church policy in line with Britain's Equality Act, passed in 2010, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The document is expected to go before the church's General Synod in July. ■—*ENI and LGCM*



The Other Six Days Reforming Hip Hop

ANOTHER LOOK AT A RIGHTEOUS RAPPER. **BY BRADLEY CHILDS**

In the Dec. 2010 issue of the *Record*, I pointed readers towards Grammy-nominated Hip Hop artist Lecrae Moore whose song, *Truth* includes the lyrics, "Come on now! We're collected and chosen, predestined just to behold Him." I believe this name deserves a second and more serious look because it seems Lecrae has started a new movement within Christian hip hop and rap. In fact, a whole industry seems to be developing around what's being dubbed "Reformed rap."

Led by Lecrae, co-founder of Rebel Records, come a number of artists garnering the respect of John Piper, Dr. D.A. Carson, controversial Missional/Calvinist Mark Driscoll and even John MacArthur; many of whom have been sampled in songs or have even collaborated with Lecrae's new crop of rappers.

Among this new group of artists you will find Flame, whose songs often focus on the topic of election. In his song, *Who Can Pluck Us?* he talks about unconditional election, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints.

Tedashii has a song titled *Identity 3* in which he raps about both the elect and the reprobate.

Trip Lee is another of those names gathering a large following. In his song, *Eyes Open* he talks about imputation of sin and total depravity.

In *Mission Accomplished*, Shai Linne says, "If saving everybody was why Christ came in history / With so many in hell, we'd have to say he failed miserably."

Yet perhaps most interesting is Curtis "Voice" Allen who does a whole song on the Westminster Confession ([search youtube.com for "Curtis Allen Westminster Catechism"](#)) and has a pretty respectable tune about the Heidelberg Catechism that's well worth a listen ([search youtube.com for "Curtis Allen Heidelberg Catechism Live"](#)). ■

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

A Strong Bond

LONDON CHURCH FORMING CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH KAREN COMMUNITY.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN AND CONNIE PURVIS



Rev. Andrew Reid of New St. James, London, Ont., at a special service welcoming 11 Karen adults as new members.

A SPECIAL CELEBRATION at New St. James, London, Ont., was a way for the congregation's Karen families to give back to the church they now call home. For the larger congregation though, it was simply another step in a growing relationship with the immigrant families who have been warmly welcomed to the church.

"They're very devout, and very humble. And they're helping us in ways they don't understand," said John Stewart, chair of the mission and social action committee.

Tah see bli see poh, an end-of-year celebration to give God thanks for the blessings the community has received, and to ask for God's continuing loving presence in the year to come, was hosted by the Karens in January. They prepared Karen and Canadian food for the entire congregation, explained the celebration's customs in their newly-learned English, and entertained with traditional Karen dances and songs. Prayers were offered by Rev. Andrew Reid and

by a local Karen pastor. Supporters came from the nearby town of Woodstock and from the largest Karen church in London, First Baptist Church, pushing attendance to about 150 people. An offering was later sent to the Back Pack

'It's really good for all of us. We're forming strong bonds'

Worker Health Team, which brings health care supplies from Thailand into Burma and distributes them in the Karen State. The charity was chosen by the Karen families. Another event is scheduled for Jan. 8, 2012.

And the celebrations don't end there. In February 2010, 13 new members joined the congregation; 11 of them were Karen, bringing the total to five Karen families or about 30 people.

"We're sharing and helping each

other," said Stewart. "They're learning English, and we're all having a lot of laughs."

The Karens are an ethnic minority from Burma, where they account for about 12 per cent of the population. Tension and violence between the separatist Karen National Union and the central government has carried on for decades; hundreds of thousands of refugees have fled since 1995 when the government army launched a major offensive against the KNU. Canada has resettled over 2,000 Karen from refugee camps in Thailand.

In support of World Refugee Day in June, a Karen woman and member of the congregation spoke about her life under fire from the Burmese army, and the loss of many family members and friends to land mines and violence.

Though New St. James isn't involved in refugee sponsorship, they are active within the immigrant community in many ways. The church helps to run "conversation circles," bringing together

native English speakers and Karen, many of whom are taking English classes. These classes, as well as special Easter and Christmas celebrations, draw additional members from the Karen community into the church, even though they aren't regular Sunday worshippers.

When a strike by the local transit workers disrupted bus services in the fall of 2009, stranding many of the Karen who rely on buses to get around the city, church members banded together to create the "NSJ transit commission" to shuttle them to jobs and ESL classes.

"Not one Karen missed a job shift or an ESL class thanks to the drivers from New St. James," said Stewart.

On the day the *Record* spoke with Stewart, he had just come back from taking a family to a new school where they met the teacher and had a tour. Members also help new immigrants negotiate social services, deal with paperwork, and accompany them to legal meetings to help with English. One group even plays Bingo to help them learn their numbers.

"It's really good for all of us," said Stewart. "We're forming strong bonds."

Indonesian families have also been trickling into the pews since 2003. It started with a trio of men who had worked in New York, but immigrated to Canada when the American immigration system stiffened in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks. They invited family and friends, eventually swelling the Indonesian contingent to 12 families, or about 36 people.

"Our Indonesian and Karen families have added richness and colour to the faith and the life of New St. James," said Rev. Andrew Reid. "It has been a joy to share with them, and have them share with us, as sisters and brothers in faith." ■

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer. Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.



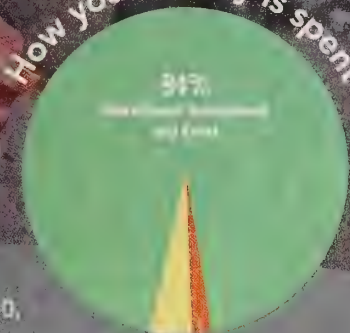
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Letter from Afghanistan

Behind the Burka

MEETING WITH WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN. BY LAURA KAVANAGH

Since arriving in Afghanistan in April, there have only been two places where I have been free to uncover my head: my hotel room, and the offices of Presbyterian World Service and Development partner, Church World Service–Pakistan/Afghanistan with mostly international people at dinner. In public and in vehicles, my head must be covered—as is the head of every other woman I have seen. In addition, there have been times today when covering my face was advised, expected and appropriate—and when I saw the circumstances, I actually preferred it this way.

I imagine that if I had been brought up in this culture it would be easier, but I struggled with all the fabric; trying to keep it in place and make it seem as effortless and graceful as those around me—though not successfully! Many, if not most women on the street are wearing blue burkas. There is clearly an unwritten set of rules for when it is needed and when it can be removed. Age is also a factor, as it seems that an older woman has much more freedom to go around with her face uncovered.

Today we visited a girls' school near Jalalabad, in Afghanistan's Laghman province. We arrived at the school unannounced around 8:00 a.m.—sometimes it is safer not to reveal your itinerary. The women (Camilla, the local interpreter; Ayesha from CWS-P/A; and I) were admitted without incident, but the men had to receive specific permission from the district authorities, which took more than 20 minutes.



The author in Jalalabad.

We met with a female-only parent and teacher committee. Meetings are held on a monthly basis when everyone can afford the time to participate. The women discuss the problems they are having regarding getting and keeping their daughters in school, they encourage one another, and they talk about the benefits of education by comparing the relative lifestyle of educated and uneducated people. Despite facing meager economic means, the prospect of their daughters securing high-paying jobs in the future is a strong incentive for parents to send their girls to school.

One of the biggest challenges with keeping girls in school is the lack of female teachers available. Many families will not allow their daughters to attend classes taught by male teachers once the girls approach puberty.

We, the women, met privately with about a dozen female teachers (a small percentage of the total teaching staff of the school). They teach a variety of grades and subjects, often to class sizes in excess of 50 students; a significant challenge to productive teaching and

learning conditions. It seems most teachers have limited training, and value the staff development offered by PWS&D's girls' education program.

As more girls attend classes, these teachers are seeing increased retention of girls in school, along with higher levels of preparedness for learning when girls begin school. Teachers try to involve students in a student-centred approach to learning.

The teachers also mitigate the large class sizes through the use of group work and engaging capable students as group leaders to assist others.

Teachers also spoke of the importance of parental involvement, particularly their support and encouragement, in promoting girls' education. Efforts to facilitate support groups and social infrastructure like the parent and teacher committee we met with earlier are important steps toward the goal of increasing and improving girls' education.

I wanted to go into the classrooms but we were not invited to do so. In the courtyard, hundreds gathered as we prepared to depart and a strange thing happened: As I pulled out my camera they scattered and hid their faces! Never in all the schools and groups of children that I have met has this happened.

I have a few photos of the women's PTC group to share but none of the girls—maybe on the next trip. ■

Laura Kavanagh is convener of the PWS&D committee, and a member of Knox, Victoria.

Renewal



Three Things

REFLECTIONS ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY. BY CALVIN BROWN

Full
coverage
of the
General
Assembly
page 29

The General Assembly reminded me of three important things that I want to share; things we should all be aware of, pray about, and respond to. The first is that money follows mission. This idea affirms that when people are committed to and excited by God's mission, the money will come. This is distinct from a planning style which "cuts the coat according to the cloth," which means we see how much people have contributed in the past and make our plans according to the money we

expect to receive. Some people claim this is the only responsible way to do church business while others argue that we can't expect God to bless us if we don't step out in faith. As a church, our actions say we don't believe strongly that money follows mission; or perhaps it is simply that we can't agree on what our mission is (or should be) and so we don't expect to be receiving more vision-inspired funds. The result must then be the default one, which is business as usual. It isn't that we don't agree on anything as Presbyterians. ➤

Let's tell the whole truth. Let's say we believe God loves those of other faiths and we love them because we are all created in God's image. Let's say in authentic humility that we know we don't know everything

Some things, like Presbyterian World Service and Development, for the most part, have gained respect and financial support from the church. Presbyterians have shown themselves generous in responding to both crisis needs and development needs. Presbyterians contributed \$1.63 million to the Haiti earthquake crisis alone!

The second thing was evident by the way we dealt with a position paper on our relationship with the Jews. On the one hand, the Church Doctrine Committee tells us we should believe "in the uniqueness, finality and unsurpassability of Jesus Christ, the sole mediator of the one covenant of grace and acknowledge our commission to bear

witness to our Lord to all peoples without distinction." But the Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Relations Committee tells us we shouldn't admit it when we are speaking to those of other faiths. Again we need to come to an agreement about who we are and what we believe, and we need to be transparent both to our members and to those of other faiths. There seems to be an idea that we need to apologize for what we believe.

I suggest a radical approach to ecumenical dialogue. Let's tell the whole truth. Let's say we believe God loves those of other faiths and we love them because we are all created in God's image. Let's say in authentic humility that we know we don't know everything but we want to share what we believe God has revealed to us. Let us say we also want to hear what they believe is of essential importance, and what God has shown them. Let's acknowledge that we believe in the authority of the scriptures as divine revelation and the final authority in matters of faith and life. Let's celebrate with them the things of importance we hold in common and acknowledge things that still separate us. Let's dialogue about things we both want, and discover how best to work together to achieve those goals in a shared community. Until we are willing to be transparent to all about who we really are, we shall never see the power of God forcefully at work in us. That requires that we are willing to make a commitment about who we believe God wants us to be.

Third: Canada is now more of a mission field than ever. Rev. Augustus Oku of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria addressed the assembly as an ecumenical guest. He was recently educated at Knox College, Toronto, and was influenced in his faith by some of our missionaries to Nigeria. He shared how he had taken leave of his ministry responsibilities in Nigeria in order to help plant a Nigerian church in Toronto. He is the first missionary to be appointed by the PCN to serve with the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Rev. Oku is a reminder that God in His providence used us to plant the gospel among many nations and now they are coming to us to renew the gospel in our midst. Some come to minister primarily to ethnic immigrants we have not been equipped to serve effectively. But increasing numbers are used to plant new works or revive our weakened congregations as pastors and leaders. How blessed we are to have these new missionaries come and bless us with their presence, their faithfulness to the gospel, and their new insights. How privileged we are to work with them and learn from them. Just when many congregations are tempted to give up, God sends us new co-workers to encourage us with faith and hope and love. ■

Rev. Calvin Brown was executive director of the Renewal Fellowship for 16 years. He retired at the end of June.

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Christ and the Canaanite Woman
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All Dogs Are Welcome Here!

WHEREVER JESUS GOES, GRACE LEAKS OUT AND EVEN HE IS CHANGED.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

August 14: Ninth Sunday
after Pentecost

Isaiah 56:1,6-8
Matthew 15:21-28

The most democratic place in Halifax is the north end of Seaview Park. You don't need a dog to get in, but it helps.

Lawyers and prison guards, teachers and students, retired and unemployed, even the odd minister or priest come with purebred dogs,

cross-breeds, and good old "Heinz 57" dogs. My almost-Lab loves to chase a ball—anyone's ball—at the park.

In our gospel today, Jesus meets a woman who doesn't know how to stay in her place. People like Jesus call her a Gentile dog.

Jesus' disciples want her to scat! They followed Jesus to "the district" ►

of Tyre and Sidon." Gentile territory. If you go to the dog park, you're going to meet some dogs.

She's a Canaanite. An ancient enemy. Of mixed race and mongrel religion. A woman alone. Her daughter's possessed by an evil spirit. People would say that was because of something wicked the mother did.

Best for Jesus to follow the Dog Whisperer's advice: No talk. No touch. No eye contact. He just quotes his personal mission statement. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." That's why he's in Tyre and Sidon. To round up purebreds from among the mutts.

Jesus' sense of mission came from prophetic words like Isaiah's. When exiles have come home, rebuilt the temple, restored true worship, begun to observe the Sabbath, the whole world will join in faith and worship.

Before that can happen Jesus must issue the first call, to his own people. Dogs will have their day. This woman and her tormented daughter may not see it. But it will come for her people.

But she comes and kneels, and says, "Lord, help me." Jesus rattles off a proverb of sorts: "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

Jesus starts to walk away. He hears from behind, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

Anyone who has ever let a dog in the house has tried to keep it out of the kitchen. Dogs don't understand this. They're part of the family. Most families drop crumbs on the floor.

This woman believes even a crumb from Jesus can help her child. She sees the one true God in him, by her own lights, ahead of schedule. Like my Shadow, who knows she'll eat at 5:30 but

Coming face to face with people we think we were supposed to hate changes us. Prejudice and tradition dog us all

starts to make noises at 4:45, just in case.

God might let grace flow a little early. And wherever Jesus goes, despite his intent, grace leaks out. Even to Gentile dogs.

This vision of healing and wholeness, worship that unites instead of dividing people, Sabbath-rest from the ordeal of making our own way in the world is too good to leave in some imagined future when we hope God will finally act.

God has come to us in Jesus. Now's the time to tear up the place cards. Put more leaves in the table. Bring in more chairs.

Meeting this Canaanite woman changes Jesus. As the rest of Matthew's gospel unfolds, we see Jesus more attuned to the poor and the outcast. He grows beyond inherited prejudices.

Coming face to face with people we think we are supposed to hate changes us. Prejudice and tradition dog us all.

In Jesus' day it was, "All Gentiles are dogs." For us it may be, "All Muslims are terrorists-in-waiting." "All homosexuals are perverted sexual predators." Or, "All poor people are lazy."

We can all look back, and say, "I used to think ..." Shake our heads at our foolishness. And look ahead, to see where God will challenge us to grow some more. To meet, to understand, and to be changed by people still "other" and strange to us. ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence De Wolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.

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Staying Awake

A LONG JOURNEY TOWARDS BAPTISM. BY TISHA LYNNE MCCOMB

I grew up in the Pentecostal church in Ottawa, but live in downtown Montreal where I am at school. I tried a few churches but nothing felt homey enough to get me out of bed on a Sunday morning. And

then one winter my best friend (who jokingly boasts me as her 'first Presby convert') suggested I apply as a youth leader at Briarwood Presbyterian.

I said, yes and after an interview got the job. To me this was a calling, especially since I felt like my creden-

tials were next to nothing. But it felt like this was where God wanted me. And the church itself, the community, is worth the 40-minute bus ride on a Sunday morning.

Answering why I want to be baptized now has led me to wonder ►

Why do I want to be baptized? I want to be part of this family. I want God as my Father and my Mother. I desire and feel I need a Christian community with brothers and sisters and cousins in Christ

why I didn't want to before. Why was I so scared? I think the reason I was so uncomfortable was because, with many aspects of life with God, I didn't want to be or feel vulnerable—before a congregation, let alone before God.

But this has changed. Now it feels right. I feel comfortable in this church and am far more comfortable with God. I am ready to publicly claim my faith and follow Jesus. I am a Christian and I just want to try all the more to follow Jesus. Getting baptized is a sign of my full commitment to God.

I don't want to admit it, but I often feel like a fake. I'm not baptized, so how I can be a Christian let alone

a youth leader is beyond me—literally. Many times I have felt that my prayers or actions have been insincere, that I was just going through the motions hoping for something more. It's mostly in my head—I know God is using me for His will and that I am precious to Him. So I am thinking that being baptized will be the beginning of a very real and sincere faith. I feel I need to get all squeaky clean before I can truly pick up my own rugged cross and follow Jesus.

My parents split up when I was about eight years old and I decided to live with my father and grandparents. They went to the Pentecostal church down the street where the community was wonderful. A small rural church with loving people whose presence I still remember: Corn roasts, potlucks, Pioneers' Club, Vacation Bible School and Sunday school. But they insisted I wear a dress; I fought hard, and eventually won the battle to wear jeans.

But somewhere in my adolescent years we stopped going. God was still around but I gave Him very little thought, let alone prayer. And then the best friend arrived. She is the daughter of a Presbyterian minister and throughout high school I would periodically attend church or youth events and retreats with her (with blue hair and ripped jeans and chains on). I was following my mother's idea of Sunday being a day of rest.

They say 16 is supposed to be the best summer a person has. I spent my summer at Gracefield Camp and Conference Centre. My best friend and others encouraged me to participate in the Leaders in Training program. Gracefield had a campership fund that allowed me to go. God made it possible and I am so thankful. It was the longest time away from home and

my first time canoeing or camping and it was amazing. With two great leaders and a diverse group of a dozen youth from all walks of life, the LIT experience was a real stepping-stone in a my faith journey. I was challenged in many discussions. I was in an environment of learning and contemplating and was given so much space to grow spiritually with other people. This is where I began to 'stay awake' to God. I couldn't hide from Him anymore.

Why do I want to be baptized? I want to be part of this family. I want God as my Father and my Mother. I desire and feel I need a Christian community with brothers and sisters and cousins in Christ.

There have been times that I have felt or seen the actions of the Holy Spirit. And I desire this gift that God has promised. I want to grow even stronger in a loving relationship with God. I am slowly letting God into the vulnerable parts of myself and want to know Him more and more intimately.

I cannot sit on a fence anymore. I am a broken and very independent girl who confesses sincerely that I need God. Being able to fully trust in God is still very hard. But I am dependent on God. I am desperate for God and cannot live without Him. I want to offer everything I have and am to Him. So I want to be baptized to follow the commandment of my Saviour Jesus Christ, to show my love for him, to follow him, to serve his people and live my life with him. I am his and he is mine, and this is me offering myself as a living sacrifice to him. ■

Tisha Lynne McComb is a member and youth worker at Briarwood, Beaconsfield, Que. She is also a student at Concordia University.



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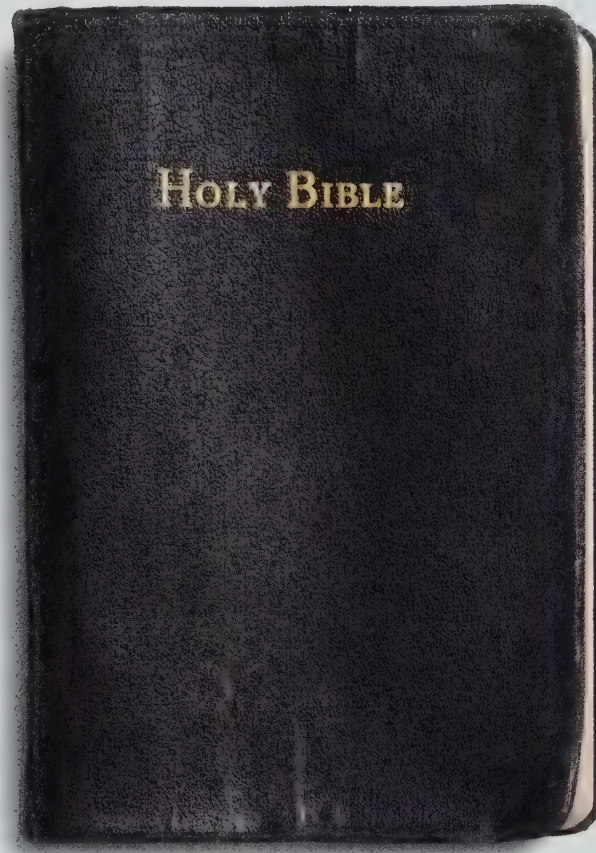
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Venturing Forward

BRIARWOOD TAKES A LEAP OF FAITH. **BY MARILYN SCOTT**

Taking a leap

of faith ... that's what Briarwood, Que., chose to do back in January 2010 when we started our second service on Sunday afternoons at 4:30. Not a "youth" service, not an "alternative" service, just a "second" service. Now that it has been running for a year, it is refreshing to reflect back on our initial excitement, the process and inevitable questions, and, YES, the success!

So why start another Sunday

service? For the past several years, we recognized signs of a congregation facing "growing pains." As in other family-sized congregations, people knew one another and celebrated joys and sorrows together, and our minister was the contact for everything. Yet we were keen to have more activities—another Bible Study, a group for new mothers, expanded local mission projects—but everyone was already overcommitted. We held

session retreats and a congregational planning event. We recognized the potential to increase in size, and the benefits this would bring. Then, serendipitously, Grant Vissers, a young theology student from the congregation, offered to lead a worship band for a second service. The session jumped on this opportunity and within three months our second service had begun.

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from the 10:30 one? It's more informal. We encourage fellowship before the service, and invite people to bring their coffee or juice into the sanctuary with them. The communion table is turned sideways, bringing the pews on the left and right sides of the sanctuary together as if we are all seated around a single table. It is covered with candles that burn throughout the service. Rather than a printed bulletin, we rely on images projected onto the two screens that have been installed at the front of the sanctuary. Our offering is collected in gourds, the sort that are used as bowls for rice in many regions of Africa and Asia. How a propos, especially when our donations go to help PWS&D food security programs. The organ is silent. Music emerges from guitars and keyboard, led by a worship band. The songs are no longer new. Some are upbeat and the temptation to clap is irresistible. Others are slow, soft and deeply reflective. Surprisingly, I enjoy the slow ones even more than the upbeat songs! Many of our scripture readings are taken from Eugene Peterson's *The Message*. The contemporary phrasing of the lectionary readings brings different insights and also provides a context that leads into the style of sermon for the second service. We are encouraged to ask questions during the sermon, or provide personal reflections, and the sermon itself is delivered in an informal manner. After the benediction, we don't sing the traditional, "amen." Rather, we sing Glen Soderholm's "May the peace of Christ be with you, and also with you," and then, one by one, we greet each other with a handshake, a look in the eye, and say, "May the peace of Christ be with you." Many a time I have noticed a tear as the power of this moment surfaces.

A few weeks ago, I looked across the sanctuary to see one

row of high school students sitting directly behind a row of seniors! The service provides families who are busy on Sunday morning with a chance to worship together. New members who come to Briarwood have asked to join the congregation at the second service. We have had baptisms at the second service, and one of our elders was ordained at the second service. Every month, we have communion at the second service, followed by a dinner.

For a reason that I can't quite explain, the service is more meaningful to me than the morning service that I still attend regularly. Is it that it is more "participatory?" Is it the music? Is it the personal connection that I feel with others? The physical space is the same. All the same liturgical elements occur and in roughly the same order. Even many of the people are the same as those I meet in the morning service. Yet, for me, I feel God's spirit more strongly. It is a highlight of my week.

And has the second service brought new energy and new people? Absolutely! A second worship band now leads the service once a month and we have a new and active college and careers group, too.

Thank you to our minister, Greg Davidson, and to Grant Vissers who got all this started. Thanks to our session and congregation who have supported the initiative. Thanks to not one, but two worship bands that have formed and lead the second services. And thanks be to God, a continuing presence in all of our lives that helps us to grow in faith by venturing forward, away from what is familiar. ■

Marilyn Scott is an elder at Briarwood, Beaconsfield, Que., and a member of the Presbyterian World Service and Development committee. She is a professor at McGill University.



BeBe and her husband, David.

The Big Step

ONCE THE HEART IS READY, EVERYTHING ELSE IS EASY. **BY JOHN FRASER**

The first time I met BeBe, she was in hospice care at Agape House, Hamilton, Bermuda. It was not a good day for her. She was in a great deal of pain and discomfort. In the following days I would drop by for a little chat. Initially that was all that it was, "just a little chat." Perhaps it was on my third visit that I asked her before leaving if I could share a few verses from the Bible with her and have a prayer. She agreed and so every week thereafter we would always bring our visit to a close with a Bible reading and a prayer. I looked forward to our visits and I like to think that she did as well. We became friends. One day I opened our conversation with the question. "How are things today?" She replied, "I

am getting ready to take the big step."

We talked about death and what takes place after death. I asked her what she would like me to say at the service that would mark her passing. She had a sense of humour and replied; "Tell them she's gone." That was it! She's gone. Her departure was usually a part of our discussion on every subsequent visit. She wanted to talk about it and I was willing to listen. I asked her if she was frightened and she replied in a somewhat uncertain tone. We talked about the afterlife and the possibilities that await us, both positive and negative. She had her doubts. I asked her if she would like to ask Jesus to come into her heart as her Lord and Saviour. She said yes and so the prayer request was

honest and straight forward. I prayed and she consented to the prayer.

"Lord, I am a sinner. I am lost without you. Come and live in my heart. Forgive me my sins and allow me the peace of your presence." Amen.

We talked about trust and faith and the promises found in Holy Scripture. I told her when the time was right, Christ would come and usher her home. "Trust him. He will be with you. You will not take that big step alone." I also reassured her that God would give her the faith that would allow for trust.

We weren't thinking of, nor did we ever ask for, a cure for her disease. We were much more concerned that she would experience the peace that the Bible speaks of even in the face ►

I spoke as if my friend could hear every word, which she probably did. I told her that God was coming very shortly for her

of death. My next visit began as most did: "It's good to see you and how are you today?" While I took note of her relaxed look I heard her say; "I'm not as frightened as I used to be, I just have to trust and have faith." I said, "Yes, and God will give you that trust and faith."

That visit was on a Thursday and before I left I asked her, "Would you like to make a profession of faith and join the church from your room, here

at Agape?" She smiled and nodded yes and there was a sparkle in her eye. She asked me, "What will I have to wear?" I replied, "What you are wearing now is just fine."

I told her that after she joined the church we could celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion together. She thought that was great. So, the very next day (Friday) her husband and two elders from St. Andrew's (Joan and Bill Davis) witnessed our sister in Christ make her profession of faith and she was welcomed into the church. We shared the broken bread and the glass of wine representing the broken body and shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We then presented her with a certificate of membership.

The following Sunday her husband told me she had slipped into unconsciousness and that time was running short. I visited her in the early afternoon. There was another faithful

caregiver by her side. I spoke as if my friend could hear every word, which she probably did. I told her that God was coming very shortly for her and she would be home—free of her cancer, free of pain, free of grief, free of sorrow, free of tears. I shared with her Psalm 23 and verses from John 14 as well as Revelation 21 and 22. I offered a prayer and I left. Her heavenly father came for her early the next morning. My friend had finally taken the big step.

If you want to know what it is like where she now calls home, she and I would both say, "Read the Bible." The initial place that Jesus was preparing for my friend was her heart and once her heart was ready she invited Him in as her Lord and Saviour. Now she was ready for her homecoming. ■

Rev. John Fraser is minister at St. Andrews's, Hamilton, Bermuda.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



Photo credit: Jen Bell

pr Visionaries
Planting seeds of hope for generations to come

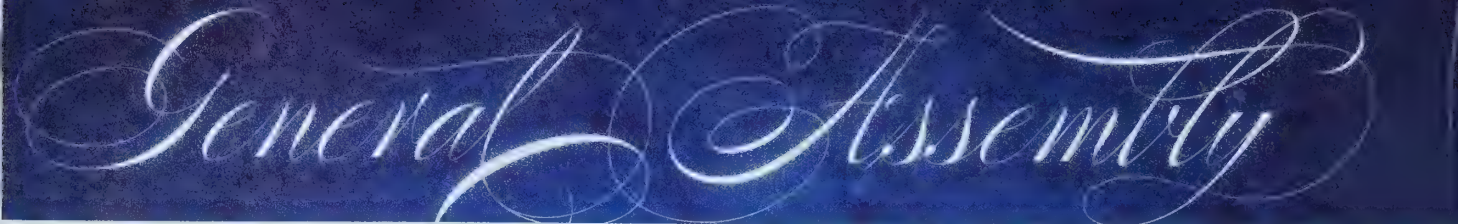
Did you know that the Synod of Saskatchewan has its own oil well? The oil well was a planned gift made to the synod, and the royalty income generated by the well helps to fund camping programs such as the Canoe Camp held each July at Camp Christopher. Your synod doesn't have its own oil well? Not to worry. Your planned gifts could help establish an endowment fund — a kind of perpetual oil well — at any of the seventeen Presbyterian camps across Canada, to provide fun and life-changing experiences for children and young people year after year.

What will your legacy be...

To learn more about how your planned gifts can make a lasting difference, visit
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*what
Didn't
happen*

THE 137TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY



A Watershed Moment?

ARE WE READY? BY DIANNE OLLERENSHAW PHOTOS BY DAVID HARRIS AND ANDREW FAIZ

THE 137th General Assembly gathered “Down by the Riverside” on the lands of the Chippewas of the Thames, the Oneida Nation of the Thames (*Onyot’a:ka*), and the Munsee-Delaware First Nation. A baptismal font and a beautiful banner stood before commissioners for the entire week. The banner logo, designed by Christine Gillard, a previous young adult representative, and expanded upon by textile artist, Mary Fay Green, set before us an image of the tree of life rooted in a circle of creation’s water with seven fish. Sometimes this logo encouraged me to take the satellite view and ponder earth as a living green-blue sanctuary. Many times I was reminded that Christians are connected around the world and we are called to live in harmony with one another and with creation. It was humbling to hear of the struggles of Christians in the Holy Land and the Middle East from international guests and Arabic-speaking Presbyterians here at home. It was exciting to welcome Rev. Augustus Oku, the first missionary appointed by the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, who has been called to establish a Nigerian mission in the Presbytery of West Toronto. It was uplifting to listen to the past moderator, Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, share highlights from his past year, especially his comment that the greatest export from Guatemala is not sugar, nor is it coffee; the greatest export from Guatemala is hope!

Daily morning worship spoke of the life-giving water of Jesus and commissioners were invited to come down

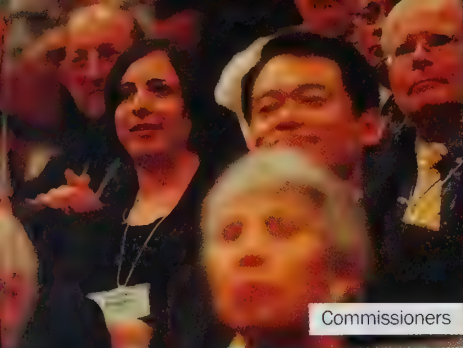
to the riverside and drink deeply. Throughout the week, I found myself pondering rivers and watersheds, and how our country is a network of waterways small and great. I realized that Presbyterians from all walks of life live on these waters and that we have been blessed with an abundance of gifts. I heard the Spirit calling us to remember our baptisms and to claim the gifts we have been given for discipleship.

I appreciated hearing a variety of opinions about what the Spirit is saying to our church in the Monday debriefing groups, in conversations en route to meals, or as commissioners mingled after sederunts. I heard from many that there is a need for the Presbyterian Church in Canada to be clear about its identity, calling and mission and that these are crucial days for our denomination. There were several attempts to have overtures concerning restructuring be addressed by a special committee that would develop an overarching vision for the church, identifying key priorities for our mission and ministry. In the end, Assembly Council was given the task to discern, define and articulate the vision of the church in consultation with a broad cross-section. I hope the council will dialogue with YARs who challenged us at this assembly to embrace social media and to be intentional about succession planning in the development of new leadership. I hope we invite those involved in francophone ministry to be at the table. Discussion about translating the *Book of Forms* into French raised the question of whether we take fran-

I realized that Presbyterians from all walks of life live on these waters and that we have been blessed with an abundance of gifts

cophone ministry seriously in Canada. I hope we approach members of congregations and presbyteries who are imagining, discerning and implementing a faithful Reformed approach to being the church today.

Reflecting on the logo one more time, the tree of life encouraged me to step back and take a long view—remembering the future is not our own. Before the opening communion service, a gentleman from the local area began talking to me about the University of Western Ontario, the location of this year’s General Assembly. He told me the university was like an arboretum and that all the trees had been lovingly chosen and planted. With great excitement, he beckoned me to visit the tulip tree which was not a magnolia but belonged to another family (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and gave me directions so that I would not miss it. In the sunshine of a new day, I went to search for the tulip tree and found it. It was remarkable; something I had never seen before. From a leaf similar



Commissioners



Opening worship



Rev. Jennifer Cameron and the Pentelows



Nora Carmi, Sabeel Centre



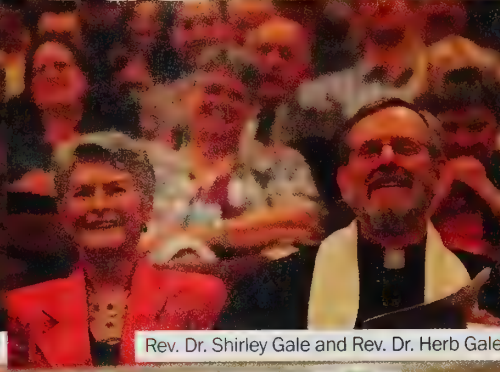
Responsive reading



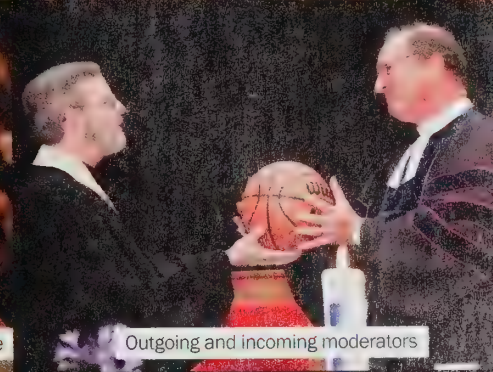
Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris



Rev. Sandy and Marly Sutherland with David



Rev. Dr. Shirley Gale and Rev. Dr. Herb Gale



Outgoing and incoming moderators



Rev. Augustus Oku



Voting time for young adult representatives



Lori Ransom

to a maple tree grew a pale yellow tulip. This tulip tree, planted near the streams of the Thames, spoke deeply of God's love for all creation and whispered a message of hope to one Presbyterian at General Assembly. I wonder, are we ready to welcome the new, to be surprised by God's grace, to share with others the passion of our faith so that we bring others to marvel at Christ's

glory? Like the tulip tree, the logo incorporating the tree of life reminds me that God is at the centre of all. God who is promise-maker and promise-giver is faithful and with us now. For the 137th General Assembly to be a watershed moment, it is my hope that we in our congregations, presbyteries and committees of the General Assembly will be attentive and listen for the

Spirit, that we practice faithful stewardship and courageous discipleship, and that we will provide a prayerful witness to friend, enemy and stranger, all to the glory of God. ■

Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw is director of regional ministries of the Synod of Alberta and the Northwest, and lives in Calgary.

Business as Usual

CALLS FOR CHANGE BOTH PASSED AND PASSED OVER. BY AMY MACLACHLAN AND CONNIE PURVIS

THE BIGGEST STORY at the 137th General Assembly is what didn't happen. While considering several different seemingly unrelated recommendations, assembly proposed numerous new motions and amendments, and engaged in spirited, passionate debate that was, essentially, all asking for one thing: a new vision for a struggling church.

"I feel like the restructuring we've been doing over the years has been done out of necessity," said Rev. Paul Kang, who proposed a motion asking that the church consider the big picture. "We need a vision, and then we can do restructuring according to that vision ... This is the time to do something."

With that in mind, Rev. Jim Patterson called for the striking of a committee to "aid the denomination to reform itself with the goal of being even more faithful to God in Christ."

The new motions came when discussing several restructuring changes within the church, including re-examining the regional staffing model, and relocation of the national office. Commissioners felt that instead of making changes here and there, an overall, guided approach was needed that would help see the church safely into the future.

Rev. Dr. Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, assured commissioners that their wants were consistent with the national church's desires, noting that Assembly Council is already tasked with the very things the new motions were asking for.

"We recognize exactly where our denomination is and the lengths to which we should be going to ensure our denomination grows and becomes stronger," said Fee. "I urge that people recognize that within the structures we have, and within Assembly Council, this assignment can be completed and completed with glory to God."

Fee's words must have allayed some fears, as the new motions were defeated. However, stemming from his comments about the Assembly Council, a motion asking the Council to "discern, define and articulate the vision of the PCC in consultation with a broad cross-section of the diversity of the larger body of the church" was moved and adopted.

The following is a snapshot of General Assembly business. A complete report can be found at presbyterianrecord.ca.

Money Matters

Assembly Council presented a motion to consider the relocation of the national office out of the Toronto area for perceived economic, social and theological reasons. The motion was amended and adopted, creating a committee that includes a broad geographical representation to: 1) frame the economic, social and theological criteria for a potential move; 2) receive input and comment from the church on these criteria; and 3) recommend whether or not relocation is appropriate.

Council also proposed a new way in which congregations' dollar base

amount is determined with a view to making it more equitable for all congregations. The dollar base reflects the total funds raised by a congregation in a given year, minus the amounts remitted for mission purposes, and minus money used for the principal and interest of debt repayments.

Council felt a change was needed to exclude monies raised by congregations for major repairs. It could spell significant relief for congregations already struggling to maintain old, large facilities. The report suggested funds raised and used for new buildings and additions would remain part of the calculation used to determine a dollar base.

However, General Assembly didn't feel the same, amending and passing a motion that also excludes funds raised for renovations and building projects.

As the dollar base of a congregation also determines its contribution to the church's pension fund, assembly amended a motion to suggest congregations' pension contributions be raised by "a percentage sufficient to offset the change in dollar base calculation."

Elders and Diaconal Ministers to Administer Communion

Assembly approved a set of guidelines that could allow ruling elders and diaconal ministers to administer the sacrament of communion in remote charges where no minister is available.

If added to the *Book of Forms*, the new section will require a candidate to be interviewed by presbytery and trained in the theology and practice of

General Assembly

the sacrament. Presbyteries may commission the candidate to administer communion in a particular pastoral charge for a two-year term, which can be renewed following a presbytery review, and the elder or diaconal minister must be accountable to presbytery through the interim moderator assigned to the charge.

The new section will be sent to presbyteries for their approval under the Barrier Act, and must be endorsed by the 2012 assembly to become law.

New Church Laws

The 2011 assembly approved five remits—or changes to the *Book of Forms* endorsed by the 2010 assembly and sent to presbyteries for approval—making them part of the official law of the church, including:

- Legislation for ecumenical shared ministries with the United Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church and Anglican Church were approved. Guidance for these ministries can be found in the Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook and the *Book of Forms*.
- A change to section 245.1 of the *Book of Forms* has effectively put an end to mandatory retirement for ministers. Those who wish to continue in a pastoral charge after age 70 may do so, with the presbytery making “arrangements mutually acceptable to the presbytery concerned, after consultation with the pastoral charge and the minister.”
- A committee of presbytery may now lodge a complaint against a minister after a routine visit to a congregation, although they are expected to first

“meet with the minister to seek resolution of the issue.” Previously, such complaints had to come from within the congregation, making it difficult for presbyteries to deal with a perceived problem when no member of the congregation was willing to lodge a formal complaint.

E. H. Johnson Award and Presentation of Prayer Shawls

For the first time ever, the annual E. H. Johnson award for cutting-edge mission was presented not to a person but to an organization. Rev. Rodger Hunter, chaplain and founder of Boarding Homes Ministry, accepted the award on behalf of his group.

“Myself, I am basically just an agent,” Hunter said at a luncheon where the award was presented. “I stand somewhere between the gifted people in the homes, and the gifted people in your churches, and suggest that life might be richer if you all got together.”

BHM is an ecumenical ministry of the Presbyterian Church that links members of congregations with people who live in boarding homes, facilitating regular visits to the homes. It currently serves 359 residents.

During the assembly, Hunter was presented with 245 prayer shawls, knitted by Presbyterians from 45 congregations, for residents of the boarding homes. Each bears a card to let the recipient know “there’s a prayer in every stitch.” As one of his final endeavours as moderator of the 2010

assembly, Rev. Dr. Herb Gale put out a pre-assembly request for shawls; at the presentation he noted that more shawls have been promised but were not yet completed.

Regional Staffing Formula Remains Unchanged

A special committee charged with re-evaluating how funding is allocated to each synod for their regional staff positions concluded the current formula “is a fair and transparent approach.”

“The present formula is based on the principle that each synod receives funding for one regional staff person (\$61,000),” the committee wrote in its report. “The issue came down to how to divide the remaining approximately \$189,000.” Committee members unanimously concluded that the current method of dividing the remaining funds according to membership was “the most equitable and logical” formula. Assembly agreed with the recommendation.

Response to Kairos Palestine Document Endorsed

An official response to a statement known most widely as the Kairos Palestine Document caused a flurry of debate on the floor of assembly.

The document, which was crafted by Palestinian Christians, was circulated to congregations and presbyteries by the 2010 assembly, along with a collection of responses from various groups and a study guide.

Debate on the floor focused primarily on tweaks to the wording of the ➤

response, fashioned by the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, including an amendment to specify the State of Israel as a "Jewish state" or "Jewish homeland." The amendment was eventually defeated.

Assembly recommended the Kairos Palestine Document, *A Moment of Truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering*, and supporting documentation, and encouraged the church to learn more about the situation in Israel-Palestine.

Ministers and Marriage

An overture from 2007 asking whether ministers should continue to sign marriage licenses or register marriages for the government provoked prolonged study by the Church Doctrine Committee. They sent a document to presbyteries and synods for study back in 2009, and while the overture raises important questions about the relationship of church and state, the responses advised leaving the current relationship as is.

However, assembly voted to send the report back to the committee in consultation with the Clerks of Assembly and legal counsel to consider potential legal implications of clergy acting as agents of the state for the solemnization of marriage in Canada, and to report back to a future General Assembly.

Listen to Teachers' Stories

A former president of the Women's Missionary Society, Druse Bryan, asked that the assembly "acknowledge the devoted service rendered by those teachers and caregivers who worked for the WMS and PCC in residential schools in Canada and who are on their own healing journeys and in need of our love and support. We thank those who gave their best, in a flawed system, for their service to the

church and to the young people in their care." The motion was adopted.

Minutes of Appreciation

Minutes of appreciation were given to Lori Ransom, who is ending her five-year term as program animator for the church's Healing and Reconciliation program; Rev. Dr. Glen and Rev. Joyce Davis who have completed five years of service at St. Andrew's Hall at the Vancouver School of Theology as Presbyterian director of denominational formation and field education supervisor, respectively; and Tori Smit was recognized for her work as associate secretary at the Vine since October 2009.

Encouraging Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Justice Ministries proposed 10 guidelines (and assembly added one more) to help foster the inclusion of diversity within all church structures and courts. "The taskforce was motivated by Paul's vision of the church in which there are no dividing walls, but a oneness in Christ demonstrated by true inclusiveness," states the report. Among other things, synods are encouraged to provide opportunities for regional staff to take training workshops in ethnic and racial diversity; and camps are encouraged to enable young people from various racial and ethnic backgrounds to attend the camps.

New Education Guidelines

Ministry and Church Vocations, after receiving feedback from across the church, proposed new guidelines for graduates of non-PCC theological colleges. Dissatisfaction with the current guidelines stem from the impression that candidates for Presbyterian ministry are required to repeat courses they completed in their M.Div. degrees; and

that candidates with extensive experience as leaders in the PCC have been assigned the same courses of study as candidates new to the denomination.

The assembly adopted new guidelines that maintain the church's current practice of requiring candidates for ministry who are graduates of "other" theological colleges to complete the candidacy process in its entirety, "but make explicit the expectation that duplication of a candidate's previous theological education is normally to be avoided." They also state that significant leadership experience within the PCC should normally be reflected in the educational requirements that are assigned, and reduce the length of programs required for completion.

Support Needed for Assistance Fund

The report of the fund for ministerial assistance asked that sessions and presbyteries be aware of "the urgent need for new infusions of capital into the fund."

According to the committee's report, disbursements from the fund will be "significantly lower this year, without new contributions" and annual Christmas/year-end gifts may have to be suspended.

The fund provides financial support for ministers who struggle to support their families on a minimum stipend.

Pension Change

Due to a projected solvency deficiency in the pension plan of over \$19 million as of Dec. 31, 2010, the Pension and Benefits Board voted to increase members' contributions from six to seven per cent of pensionable income, effective Jan. 1, 2012. This would contribute approximately \$459,000 to the plan, and was approved by assembly. The last increase in employee contributions occurred in 2004. ■

Speaking Up



Rev. Rodger Hunter

Rodger Hunter of Boarding Homes Ministry, recipient of the E.H. Johnson award for being on the cutting edge of mission:

"Boarding Homes Ministry does not own or operate these homes but secures permission to join with the people who live there. Ten,

20, 30, 40 residents can live in a boarding home in a sad blend of overcrowding and isolation.

"Boarding homes can be found in all our cities, and sometimes in towns of just a few hundred people. There is a good chance you could find one close to your home congregation. Regrettably, because society does not always provide generous care for those who have a mental health condition, homes like these are simply part of the great Canadian landscape.

"Our ministry has the privilege of inviting members from churches to build relations with the people in a home. I think it will be a gift, for in the sparse environment of a boarding home the interactions are small enough to hold the enormity of the Divine. Pared away from the world's distractions, that community in Christ can listen to all the cross-chatter of extremes: affliction and blessing, the chilling realities of enforced material poverty and spiritual riches, the whisper of Divine love, and the hard slap of stigma. It is our privilege to invite church members to become part of such a glorious holy communion.

"Team members who have visited for years, and have settled into these homes, say they have found new teachers in the residents. They have acquired, in the deepest sense, a new set of spiritual advisors.

"The residents are called in God to be our teachers and provide insights into the subtleties of how Spirit moves in community. Their call invites us to empty ourselves for a while, and rest in an afflicted space where holiness can be taken seriously." ■

This is an excerpt of Rodger Hunter's E.H. Johnson address.

The complete text will appear in an upcoming issue of the Record.

Matthew Sams, student representative, Knox College, Toronto:

"The key moment for me was a seemingly mundane moment. We are allowing, in certain circumstances, ruling elders and diaconal ministers to celebrate Holy Communion ... In a very practical but deeply theological way, we've shown our sisters and brothers in Christ in remote congregations how dearly we love them; that we are willing to generously give to them what we have closely guarded for centuries: the privilege of administering the sacrament of Holy Communion. We are saying to them that their participation in Christ, that the growth of their faith, is more important than our grasping on to what has defined us as ministers. How generous is that?!

"We've done this wisely and responsibly. We've done this by respecting our traditions, respecting our subordinate standards, respecting scripture, but always looking to the Living Word to guide us to where we need to be.

"We're beginning the process of no longer defining our roles in ministry by what we won't let other people do. Almost 100 years ago, after Church Union, we began to define ourselves in opposition to the United Church, saying we're not them. We became the antonym church. Now we are saying who we are as ministers of Word and Sacraments not by what we won't let others do, but by what we bring to the church. This is an initial step in our long journey of allowing God to recast us into the church we are called to be in Canada. This is exciting!" ■



Matthew Sams

One of Many Voices

A YAR'S EXPERIENCE. BY MIRIAM SMIT



Miriam Smit and Logan de Bruijn

WHEN I FIRST stepped up to a microphone on Thursday, my heart was pounding and my hands shook, yet beyond all my nerves there was a silence throughout the room. All the people in the auditorium had ceased side conversations and web searches to hear my opinion, my voice. I was later thanked multiple times for both my input and my willingness to speak. The words I said began as a whispered rant to a fellow young adult representative, yet it became vital at that microphone. Through the forum of General Assembly we saw the power and importance of youth voices on the listening ears of commissioners, and most of all we heard it in the words of thanks that followed when we offered our opinions. Many in our group felt empowered to speak and share, both with the assembly and with each other. Our discussions spanned our evenings and included a guest appearance from the Moderator. In our discussions of hot button issues, we represented many different opinions and many backgrounds. We learned there is no single youth voice, but a mass of opinions and goals, even within our small group of 12. We could not imagine what the hopes of the greater church would be.

Sometimes our experiences on the congregational level have been very different from our experiences at assembly. Though a few among us had been elected as elders in their home congregations, many had little chance to give their opinions. I, for example, juggle two churches—one in Waterloo, where I go to university, and another in Toronto where my family lives. Therefore, eldership is not an ideal possibility for me. Others were too new in their congregations, were children of the minister, or were members of a church unwilling or unable to elect a young person to such a high position. Instead, we have been approached about youth issues, but not much beyond them. One YAR even said she was afraid of returning home after having her words so appreciated by the commissioners. We quickly realized we would not be asked for our thoughts; we needed to stand up and make our voices heard.

We created Our Voice, a group that uses Facebook, forums and YouTube to share the ideas of youth across Canada and the Presbyterian Church—a new form for a reforming church. We hope that through these methods, youth will speak and the church will listen. It's time to listen, for the future of our church is not its youth or children; we, and all its members, are the present. You can never reach a moment and say, "Here is the future." Rather, you reach a never-ending stream of presents. It is

We created a way for the voices of Presbyterian youth and those beyond our walls to be heard. We created Our Voice, a group that uses Facebook, forums and YouTube to share the ideas of youth across Canada and the Presbyterian Church

time the entire church stood and spoke, including the youth and young adults who are so often afraid to speak out.

I would like to personally encourage you, the reader, and you, the church, to join us, speak your mind and be heard. We don't care if you are in the church, beyond the church, 16 or 86; we simply want to make the church a place where all voices are heard and given equal weight. So take this article, our videos and our websites, pass them on, and use them to make all voices heard. ■

Miriam Smit was this year's young adult representative from the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington.

online extra

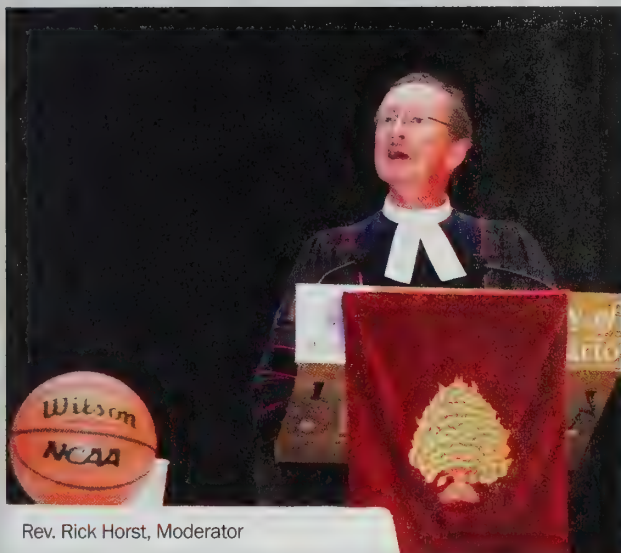
If you wish to know more about the Our Voice movement, please watch our YouTube video by searching **youtube.com** for "Our Voice Presbyterian YARs"; visit our Facebook page by searching **facebook.com** for "Our Voice"; or our forums at: **vocal.forumotion.ca**.

General Assembly



Assembly Hall, London, Ont.

Shouting Out



Rev. Rick Horst, Moderator

Rev. Rick Horst, Moderator of the 137th General Assembly:

"In and of itself, there is nothing wrong with institutions, but the Presbyterian Church in Canada is not called of God to be an institution. Instead, we are called and empowered to be a 'movement' for Christ in the world, looking to live out the gospel in ways that will address human hurts and hopes in concrete ways. God invites us to be risk-takers in mission, and to be intentional about our ministries." ■

Ms. Nora Carmi, from the Sabeel Centre:

"Today, there are approximately 14 million Arab Christians in the Middle East, belonging to a whole range of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism, with 13 main churches having their See in Jerusalem. Though Palestinian Christians are less than two percent of the population of Palestine-Israel, they ... have lived the same fate as refugees, and have the same aspirations of living in a democratic state where all citizens are treated equally and with respect, regardless of their faith or affiliation.

"The great achievement of the forgotten faithful is the Kairos Palestinian document, *A Moment of Truth*. It is a word of faith, hope and love from the heart of the suffering of the Palestinian people. Amidst all the pain, we discern at this opportune time that we all have to act together for a just peace for all.

"The call includes Muslims, Jews, decision-makers and the international community observing the exoneration of evils in the Middle East and the growing tendencies toward fundamentalism. We realize there is an urgent need for revisiting our theologies and condemning the distortion of sacred texts to promote ideological and political interests. We realize that the oppressive systems of demolition cannot reign eternally. It is our responsibility to stand up nonviolently against them.

"Standing with the oppressed is a Christian responsibility. We urge you to hear the Kairos call, to dare and speak the truth and stand for justice." ■

PART 2

Is Multiculturalism Bad for the Church?

A REFLECTION ON CHURCH AND ETHNICITY. BY DANIEL CHO

“The approach to build a multicultural society and to enjoy each other has failed, utterly failed.”

So proclaimed German Chancellor Angela Merkel last year in a speech to her party in specific reference to Turkish immigrants. Similarly, British Prime Minister David Cameron earlier this year at a conference on terrorism declared, “We’ve allowed the weakening of our collective identity. Multiculturalism has encouraged different cultures to live separate lives apart from each other and apart from the mainstream.” Even in our church experience the meaning of multiculturalism is not always clear. What we do know is that these kinds of conversations can easily ignite strong passions and lead to unkind rhetoric. How did something that once sounded so ideal, equitable and noble become a hotbed of such

intense disagreement? (It’s noted that both leaders were roundly criticized for using multiculturalism as an easy scapegoat for their respective nations’ economic and security problems.)

As I outlined in Part 1, I believe we need to reflect on what kind of Christian community we want to build as a diverse people called to unity. So it will be important for us to go beyond our cultural bigotries on the one hand and the pretensions of political correctness on the other, and connect with our prejudices and convictions in an open manner as befits Christ’s body. So I want to invite us all—white and ethnic-specific congregations—to a frank, respectful conversation about the possibility of a genuine diversity

in the Presbyterian Church in Canada while steering clear of our preconceptions and agendas, lest we merely say, “We’re a very multicultural church ... just look at all the ethnic congregations we have!”

I began to reflect on the question of multiculturalism and the church after reading an article by political philosopher Susan Okin entitled, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* As a feminist writer she sees the ghettoization of cultural groups as a bad deal for women because as it reinforces the traditions and practices of male dominance, it also cuts women off from the mainstream. Okin points to examples like forced marriage, female circumcision, and the toleration of oppressive and abusive treatment of women.

Whatever you may think of this provocative analysis for our purpose, I want to first highlight the aspect of the ghettoizing of ethnic-specific congregations. We know that “they” are out there somewhere—in that other city, in that other province, in that other presbytery, in that other neighbourhood. Sometimes we even run into them at General Assembly. It seems the usual



way we relate to ethnic groups is from a distance. The downside of this is obvious—we lose out on the opportunity to foster culturally rich relationships. We’ve all heard that maxim about Sunday morning being the most segregated time of the week. The continued growth of ethnic Presbyterian churches is a good thing. But because we are structurally and even psychologically removed from each other, there is sadly little if any interaction. So in this sense,

is multiculturalism bad for the church?

I’ve heard some people lament the fact that ethnic groups would rather start their own congregations than be part of existing ones. But we easily forget that a strong cultural cohesion exists with common beliefs, language, values and mindsets. A certain comfort is found in such communities, which is why they tend to be robust centres of faith. Whatever their language they can understand the Christian story as inter-

preted through their respective communities. It’s what shapes their identity in Christ and their validation as part of the ongoing redemptive history both as a people and as individuals.

My own family emigrated here from South Korea in the late 60s, as many others did, for a better life in Canada. That “early” church served as a critical haven for spiritual, social and emotional needs for many distressed and disenfranchised immigrants. As they were trying to ➤

The real frustration is that normally one must be resigned to this mistreatment or disempowerment under these segregated circumstances because “that’s just the way things are”

cope in a foreign land with its difficult language, confusing structures and strange attitudes, they felt a certain validation as displaced people because they were among family. Like the Koreans, other cultural groups too found a home in the Presbyterian Church.

While many ethno-cultural members choose to join traditionally white congregations for various reasons, to arbitrarily expect this of all others can lead them to feel minimized and devalued with regard to their ethno-cultural identity. A person’s spiritual journey will not be as meaningful as it can be unless that journey is a familiar avenue by which to deepen faith and experience God in community in a way that resonates in the heart. So we need to be careful about what we might casually demand of another individual or group.

Does this mean then that we are further reinforcing the “cultural walls” that already separate us? Maybe so. Besides, theologians tell us that we don’t experience faith in a vacuum; rather, faith is firmly rooted in a particular cultural context which uniquely shapes our understanding of God and the spiritual life. But we’re also told that we should not remain confined to our cultural faith, for faith transcends cultures, rendering them incomplete. It’s the proverbial starting point, not the finish line. The essence of my early

faith was profoundly challenged as I began to study Western theology and became more involved outside of my Korean church context. From the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., white Christians as a whole were confronted with a dramatically different understanding of sin, equality and justice as seen through the social and spiritual struggles of the black community. Our task as Christians is to go beyond culture as we discern how our understanding of God can be enhanced through our relations with others who are different from ourselves.

Remember Okin’s claim that multiculturalism gives a green light to the status quo of group values at the expense of some members. Speak to any ethnic members candidly and they will tell you of difficulties, arising from the practice of certain cultural values, regarding serious matters of fairness, equality and mistreatment in their community. But the real frustration is that normally one must be resigned to this mistreatment or disempowerment under these segregated circumstances because “that’s just the way things are.” If this is the case, is multiculturalism bad for them?

Even though many in ethnic churches are aware they belong to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, they show a startling lack of knowledge about—or interest and investment in—this aspect. This goes for regular members, elders and ministers alike. But should we expect anything different? After all, they are self-contained communities that have the luxury of detachment.

Some find comfort in a familiar cultural church ethos but it is exactly this feeling of security that works against them sometimes. Speaking in the *Record* (May 2007), past moderator Rev. Cheol Soon Park said of his Korean congregation, “People come to feel secure, safe and comfortable, and once they find that, they don’t want to come out so we’re encouraging them to interact with other congregations and to be exposed to broader aspects of Canadian society ... but it’s not an easy task.”

The call to Christian unity should compel us to go beyond superficial declarations of diversity and try to bridge the gap or surmount the wall between us. Otherwise we can easily become blasé about our multicultural context because we wouldn’t need to know anything about ethnic folks out there in the enclaves. We can feel good just knowing they’re Presbyterian. I believe this leads us to an unavoidable paradox: the better we feel, the more we’re encouraging separatism or at least tolerating the disconnect.

Our attitude should be one of permeability of cultural walls—intentionally engaging with others while in one’s cultural group but not clinging to culture as an end in itself. I don’t mean a simplistic view of bi-cultural identity based on convenience of food choices or dual sports team allegiances. Rather, this means a fidelity to real Christian unity as fellow Presbyterians. It involves venturing from the enclaves sometimes and sharing the commitment of the wider church. Likewise, white congregations can understand the positive force of cultural cohesion but need not regard ethnic churches as detached, uninterested groups. It’s important to make connections as spiritual kinfolds who affirm these ethnic ministries. This approach has to be a two-way street running between the enclaves and the wider church. The cultural wall doesn’t have to be taken down as long as it remains porous, as long as we all know that we stand with one another in common ministry.

We may now only see in a mirror dimly by our imperfect knowledge of God. But when we strive to see the reflection of Christ in a mirror that is coloured with the richness of all faces, then we can know the possibilities of his perfect love. We will come to discover true unity and there celebrate communion as brothers and sisters. ■

Rev. Daniel Cho is minister at Rexdale, Toronto. Part one of his essay appeared in our June issue.

What Matters is Hope

WE ARE A POWERFUL MOVEMENT SHARING CHRIST'S TRANSFORMING GRACE. **BY RICK HORST**

"When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.'"
—Matthew 11:2-5

As the 137th General Assembly drew to a close that Friday morning in London, Ont., I chose these verses from Matthew's gospel as a final piece for reflection before calling for an adjournment and offering concluding prayers. It is and always has been for me one of the most compelling passages in all of the Bible, and it addresses, I believe, our contemporary hope for the church in profound ways.

Consider its honesty. The very same enthusiastic John who "leapt in his mother's womb" when pregnant, young Mary was nearby, now struggles to be certain that his Messianic preparations have not been in vain. "Are you the one?" John asks. There is both apprehension and hope in his question, and he awaits a conclusive response.

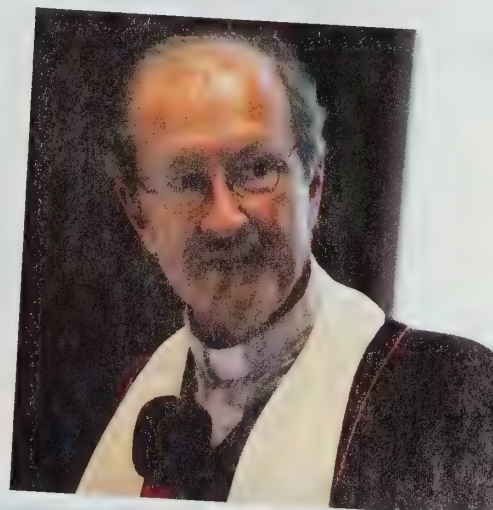
The last time I was asked to verify who I was, I appealed to protocol and produced a passport. It displayed my name, my nationality, and for good measure, an accompanying photo of

a man who appeared to be a humourless insomniac. Mercifully, it sufficed, as those things tend to for governments and institutions. But Jesus is not interested in making appeals to governments or institutions to validate his authority. No doubt, he could have told John that he was a verifiable descendent of King David, or even the one whom Isaiah spoke of in his prophecy. For John, that should be

CAN OUR CHURCH
DISCOVER AGAIN THAT
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BOUND INSTITUTION?

convincing enough, wouldn't you think? But neither of those traditional criteria seem to matter to Jesus in this self-defining moment. Because for Jesus, what matters is hope. What matters is health. What matters is abundant life. What matters is people like you and me, scarred and scared, who long to be embraced and loved and set free from the burdens of daily hurt and despair.

Can our church discover again that we are never at our best as a tradition-bound institution, but rather as a powerful movement sharing Christ's transforming grace? By the power of God's Spirit, congregations of ordinary people can still do extraordinary things for the blessing of humanity, everyday!



Rick Horst

When we grasp afresh that our priority mission in Christ is to address human hurts and hopes, and not matters of institutional maintenance, membership and money, we discover that these lesser things just fall in line. Turns out, healthy congregations go places they may never have imagined, and see encouragement and human blessing they only dreamed of! When we have the courage to truly cast our nets, we will indeed see Christ in our work. ■

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Dr. Rick Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca



Knox-Calvin, Harriston, Ont.

Rev. Dr. Herb Gale, moderator of last year's assembly, and his wife, Rev. Dr. Shirley Gale, were guests of honour at Knox-Calvin in May. He spoke on creating partnerships and Knox-Calvin proved how to do it. Seventy guests, a roast beef dinner, a vocal ensemble, and an inspiring speaker all added up to proceeds donated to Canadian Foodgrains Bank projects in Harriston. That's partnership and mission and it was also Knox-Calvin's 150th anniversary.



Boston Marathon

"I believe that running is a form of prayer. It is peaceful and gives me time to reflect on what God is doing in my life in the midst of His natural elements. Breathing in the scent of pine trees, apple blossoms, or fresh rain can remind me of who is in control of this world. With my whole body aching and exhausted at the end of the race, some may think this is what death feels like. On the contrary—experiencing the thrill of such an event, using the gifts given to me, and pushing myself to my limits—this is what life feels like!"—Shawn Smith, member at St. Andrew's, Maple, Ont.



St. Giles, Sarnia, Ont.

St. Giles welcomed 11 new members last January. In addition, two members of the church renewed their professions of faith. A reception was held after the service to celebrate this joyous occasion in the life of the congregation.

Heritage Green, Stoney Creek, Ont.

Heritage Green describes itself as a "small and struggling" church. You wouldn't know it by their mighty hearts: These young missionaries made Irish soda bread and sold it to raise \$135 for Presbyterian World Service and Development to help feed hungry children.



First, Stellarton, N.S.

First had a mission awareness worship in March. Representatives of two Atlantic Mission Society auxiliaries, Florence Young and Maclellan Fraser, conducted the service. Seen here are some of these mission-driven worship leaders: Mary Arseneau, Olive Ross, Betty Dunbar, Colleen McPherson; back, Flo Ives, Catherine Kohlsmith, Vanessa Campbell. On our website, Stephen Allen, associate secretary of Justice Ministries was the guest speaker.

St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont.

The past. The present. The future. St. Andrew's celebrated its 178th anniversary in May. Dr. Charles Fensham of Knox College, Toronto, was the guest speaker. He's seen on the left with Suzanne and Justin Kerr, proud parents of Ella Carolyn Kerr, baptized that morning, and Rev. Dr. Doug Brown.



online extra

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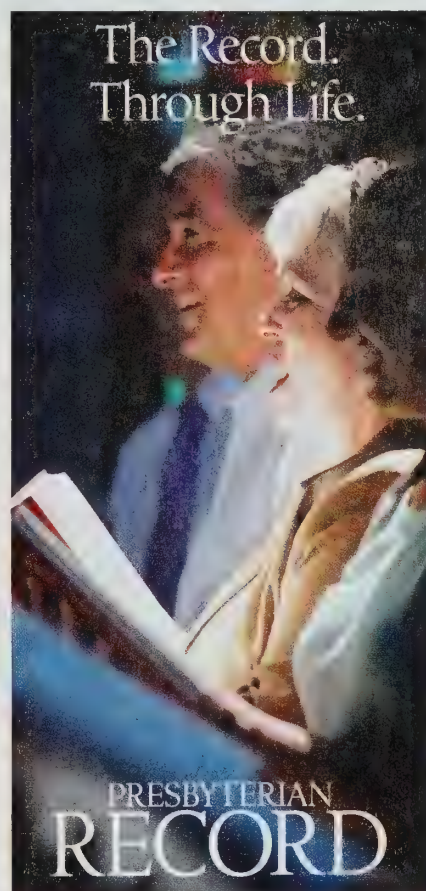
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grandfather of Caitlin (Steve) Bergeron, Cameron Macdonald, Dylan and Sarah Caldwell, and Elise and Michelle Keatings. Survived by his sister, Eleanor Ross.

Norm had a 43-year career with Ontario Hydro. He was raised in Dovercourt Presbyterian Church, Toronto, and served faithfully as an elder in the Presbyterian Churches of St. Stephen's, Weston; Trinity, Don Mills; St. Andrew's, Mansfield; Knox, Alliston; and Essa Road, Barrie, Ont. Norm is sadly missed by his family and friends who are grateful he is alive in Christ.



Van Seters, Rev. Dr. Arthur, In God's own timing, Arthur was called to his eternal home on Saturday, May 21, 2011. He was a pastor, seminary professor and administrator for over 45 years. Most of all he was a husband, father and friend. He was profoundly loved by his wife, Rowena (married 52 years) and will be deeply missed by David (Adine), Stephen (Andrea), Timothy (Vivian), Philip, and Thomas (Susanah); grandchildren, Philip, Juliette, Sarah, Luke, Alexa, Samantha, Aaron, Nathan and Naomi. He will also be missed by his brothers John (Elizabeth),

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Obituaries

Macdonald, Norman Allan, (February 25, 1929-April 1, 2011). Beloved husband of Rina (Pescara); dear father of Alan (Margaret) Macdonald, Rev. Sabrina (Rev. Dr. Terry) Ingram and Jackie (Rev. Marty) Keatings; loving



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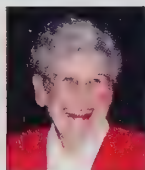
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Richard (Judi) and Fred (Joanne). His sister, Phil and brother Hugo (Pat) predeceased him.

He was ordained in 1965 by the Presbytery of East Toronto. He served pastoral charges in Port Elgin, Ont., Sackville and Dorchester, N.B., and then at St. Andrew's, St. Lambert, Que. Beginning in 1974, he was professor and chief administrator at the Montreal Institute for Ministry, Vancouver School of Theology and Knox College. He traveled widely in Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa. In 1999, he was elected Moderator of the 125th General Assembly.

An informal gathering was held at Armour Heights Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Ont., on May 25, 2011 and a memorial service took place at Knox College on May 26, 2011. At the centre of his life was the infinite grace of God revealed in the cross of Christ.



McDowell, Ruth Elizabeth Stewart, passed away peacefully and with grace at the Brant Centre, Burlington, Ont., on Saturday, April 16, 2011. Born on June 18, 1916 in Brantford, Ont., she lived her formative years in Brantford. Ruth's early involvement in the Youth for Christ movement led to graduation

from London Bible College in the mid-1940s, and mission fields in Manitoba. In 1948 she moved to Chatham, Ont., to begin her professional career as deaconess at First Presbyterian Church.

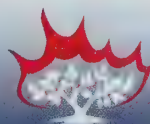
Ruth continued her work at First Presbyterian in many different capacities including elder and Christian educator with a deep faith, devotion and generosity of time for over 50 years. As junior girls and adults camp director at Kintail Camp in the 1960-70s, she will be remembered as "Skipper." In 2003, she moved to Southampton, Ont., and a new church home at Tolmie Presbyterian where she continued her involvement and was an asset to the adult education program.

Despite the decline in her health during the last few years, she continued sharing her positive outlook on life and her inner joy with her fellow residents and staff who loved and cared for her. Ruth will be remembered as a humble lady who touched many lives through her ability to spread joy, her deep Christian faith and her love for her family. Will be greatly missed by daughter, Margaret (Bob), son, Tom (Cathy), grandchildren, Mark (Tracy), Scott (Jennifer), Sarah (Lee), Mary Catherine and Carrie, and great grandchildren Riley, Nolan and Klacy. A service of celebration of Ruth's life was held at First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth Street, Chatham, Ont., on Sunday, June 26, 2011. ■

Faithfully Serving

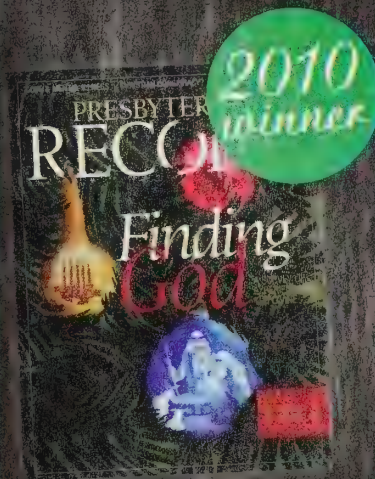
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Please be sure to write your name, age and your church's information on the back of each entry.

Deadline is November 1st, 2011

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This means you'll be spending a lot more time at home and a lot more time with your brothers and sisters than you normally would. Perhaps Mom and Dad aren't even going to be home to help sort out problems, or perhaps you'll be spending long hours trapped in the backseat of a car with each other!

Check out these three stories of anger and conflict among siblings:

Cain and Abel – (Genesis 4:4-9)

When the Lord accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's, Cain became very angry and committed the ultimate sin.

Jacob and Esau – (Genesis 27)

When Esau heard that Jacob planned to steal his blessing, Esau became very angry and held a grudge against Jacob, even planning to kill him.

Joseph and his brothers – (Genesis 37-45)

Joseph was favoured by his father, Jacob. His brothers resented Joseph for the special treatment he received.

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join the conversation...

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AUGUST

Attending making other
people angry. Saving sorry.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE
CAUSES OF THE ANGER AND
FIGHTING?

WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF YOU LET
ANGER DRIVE?

WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE SIN?
WHAT MAKES YOU ANGRY?

SUBMIT your questions, comments and thoughts at presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder so we can
discuss them in the coming months!

Jesus, who travels with me in the back of my boat, is in command and control of the very thing that plummets my life

we knew we were all crammed in the little eight-foot punt, whizzing down the length of the slough at the pleasure of a pleasant zephyr. We got to the end of the slough, dropped the sail, unstepped the mast, dug out the oars and proceeded to row back the length of the slough to do it all over again. That's when the Rocky Mountain Trench provided us with one of her usual weather tricks and the beautiful zephyr suddenly became an ugly gale.

Mrs. Andrews said, "Boys, I really think you should let me man the oars."

It's not that we were too proud, but I don't think we could quite get our minds around how the punt would be able to manage the huge waves if Mrs. Andrews sat in the front rowing seat and the two of us sat in the stern. And so, we rowed all the harder right into the teeth of the gale. All that we were able to accomplish was to lose what little ground we had gained and get semi-swamped by the waves rolling over the bow. Suddenly we were sideways to the wind and in real danger of being seriously swamped by the slough. That's when Mrs. Andrews suddenly showed up as teacher, exercised her authority, sat the two of us in the stern and grabbed the oars. In a few moments we were surging ahead, quartering the waves, driving hard like a determined destroyer albeit at very awkward stern to bow rake. Man, could that woman row.

I will never forget that experience, nor will I ever forget Mrs. Andrews. Much later, when I came to read the Bible, it was that image of Mrs. Andrews that came to my mind when I read the story of Jesus in the back of the disciples' boat in Mark 4:35-41. Jesus didn't row the boat in that story, but man, could he ever rebuke a nor'easter.

Boats seem to show up frequently in the gospel story. Lake Gennesaret

or Galilee was the centre of life for the triangle of little towns that Jesus performed 95 per cent of his ministry in. Whether one lived in Chorazin, Bethsaida or Capernaum, one related to the lake and to boats and to wind on the water. And so, in the gospels Jesus frequently seems to be dealing with his disciples in boats.

I have spent a fair bit of my life in boats on the water, enough that the metaphor for a Christian life is certainly not lost on me. The formal idea seems to be as old as Tertullian and then Clement of Alexandria who said, "Let the dove or the fish or the vessel flying before the wind, or the marine anchor be our signets."

'A vessel flying before the wind.' That can be kind of a warm fuzzy metaphor, until the wind blows a gale and suddenly, "Now luh, da arse is gone right out of er." That's when I need to know that Jesus is in the back of my boat. It's not that he rows real good, it's that he commands the storm.

He commands the storm? That's what my Bible says; and it says it caused his disciples to be terrified, too. I've often wondered why. He just saved them, didn't he? Well, I think that's kind of the point. He didn't just save them. If he had just saved them he would have pulled a Mrs. Andrews and grabbed an oar. Instead, he commanded the storm. The significance for me in all this is that Jesus, who travels with me in the back of my boat, is in command and control of the very thing that plummets my life. At first blush, that can be a bit of a scary revelation, for sure. No wind blows that he does not command. No seas roll that do not obey him.

But upon further reflection, if this revelation is true, and the Bible seems to insist that it is, what ever else it means, it means that in even the toughest sailing that I face in my

life, the one who loves me enough to die to save me has complete control of it all. Who is this in the back of my boat? He is certainly my Saviour, and apparently much, much more.

For me this summer, this biblical truth has been instilling in me a new curiosity as to the storms in my life and divine providence. Perhaps more significantly, it is compelling me to risk praising the Lord in all things. The psalmist put it well:

Some of you set sail in big ships; you put to sea to do business in faraway ports. Out at sea you saw God in action, saw His breathtaking ways with the ocean: With a word He called up the wind—an ocean storm, towering waves! You shot high in the sky, then the bottom dropped out; your hearts were stuck in your throats. You were spun like a top, you reeled like a drunk, you didn't know which end was up. Then you called out to God in your desperate condition; He got you out in the nick of time. He quieted the wind down to a whisper, put a muzzle on all the big waves. And you were so glad when the storm died down, and He led you safely back to harbour. So thank God for His marvelous love, for His miracle mercy to the children He loves. Lift high your praises when the people assemble, shout Hallelujah when the elders meet! (Psalm 107:23-32, The Message) ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.



Who's in the Back of the Boat?

BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

"STUPID WIND," I SAID, trying hard not to cuss out loud, which is real difficult when you are only 12 years old.

"Aaarrggg," said Bruno, sitting beside me as he put his Catholic back into his oar. Bruno was my best friend and a holy influence on me. He wouldn't say poop even if his mouth were full of it.

"Boys, are you sure you don't want me to row?" said Mrs. Andrews, from her perch in the back of the boat.

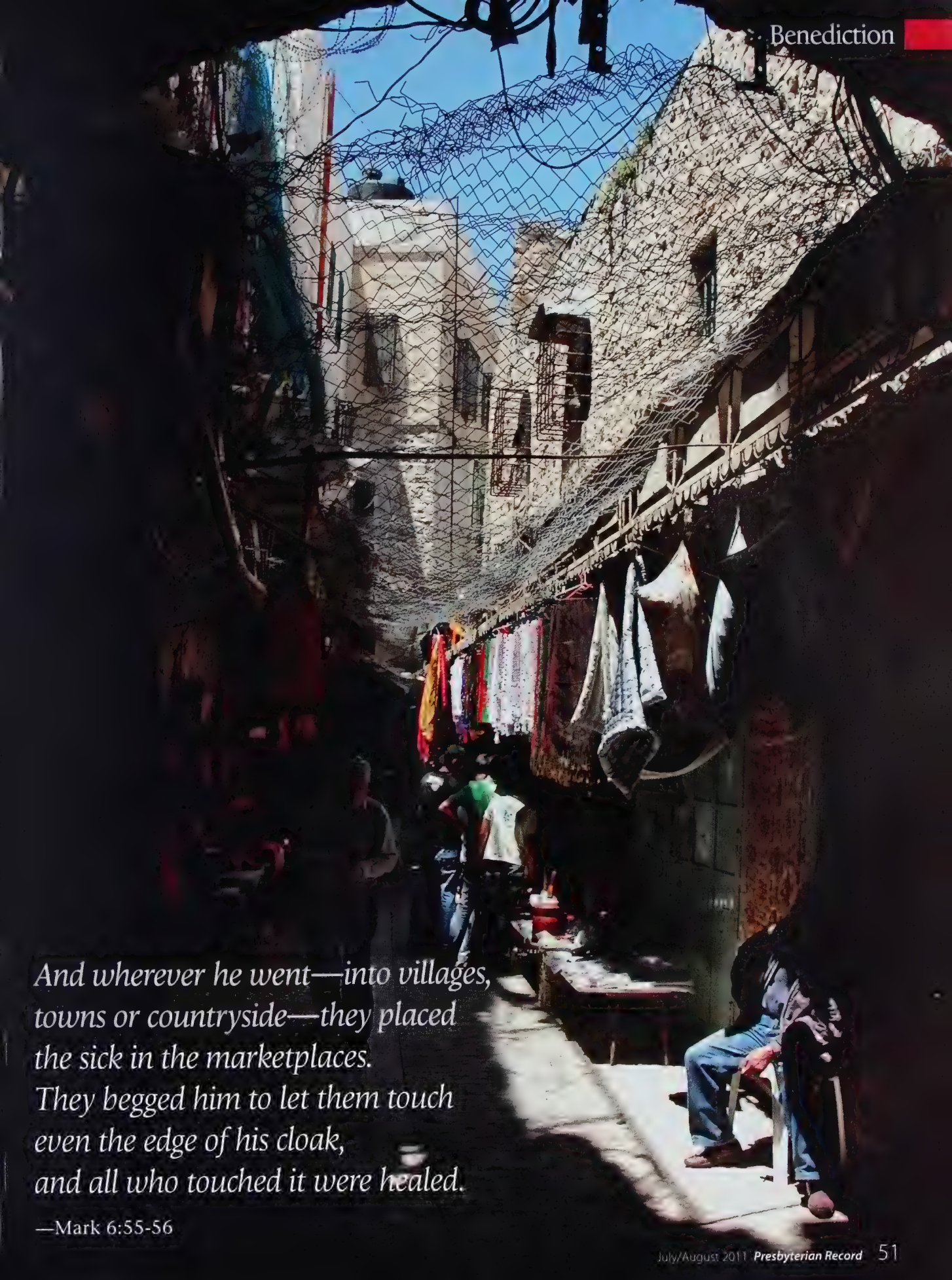
"Stupid wind," I said, losing the temperance battle inch by inch with each cold wave that crashed over the front of the punt and washed my T-shirt clad back.

Mrs. Andrews was our teacher. She was generous in every way; as a mom, a friend, a community member, an educator and in physical stature. As a teacher in a one-

room country school with a dozen country hellions with overactive imaginations dispersed through seven grades, somehow she managed to control us, teach us and at the same time be a generous friend to each one of us. It was as a generous friend that she was sitting in the back of the boat two-manning the tiller of our eight-foot plywood sailing punt. It was her generous stature that was resulting in about two inches of freeboard at the stern while at the same time making it difficult for Bruno and I to reach the water with our oars as we sat side by side rowing our fool heads off closer to the bow.

Bruno and I tended to go on about our sailing punt and the fun we had sailing her on the two-mile long slough back of the Wasa lumber camp. Mrs. Andrews told us she used to sail too and loved it. The next thing

continued on page 49



*And wherever he went—into villages,
towns or countryside—they placed
the sick in the marketplaces.
They begged him to let them touch
even the edge of his cloak,
and all who touched it were healed.*

—Mark 6:55-56



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SEPTEMBER 2011

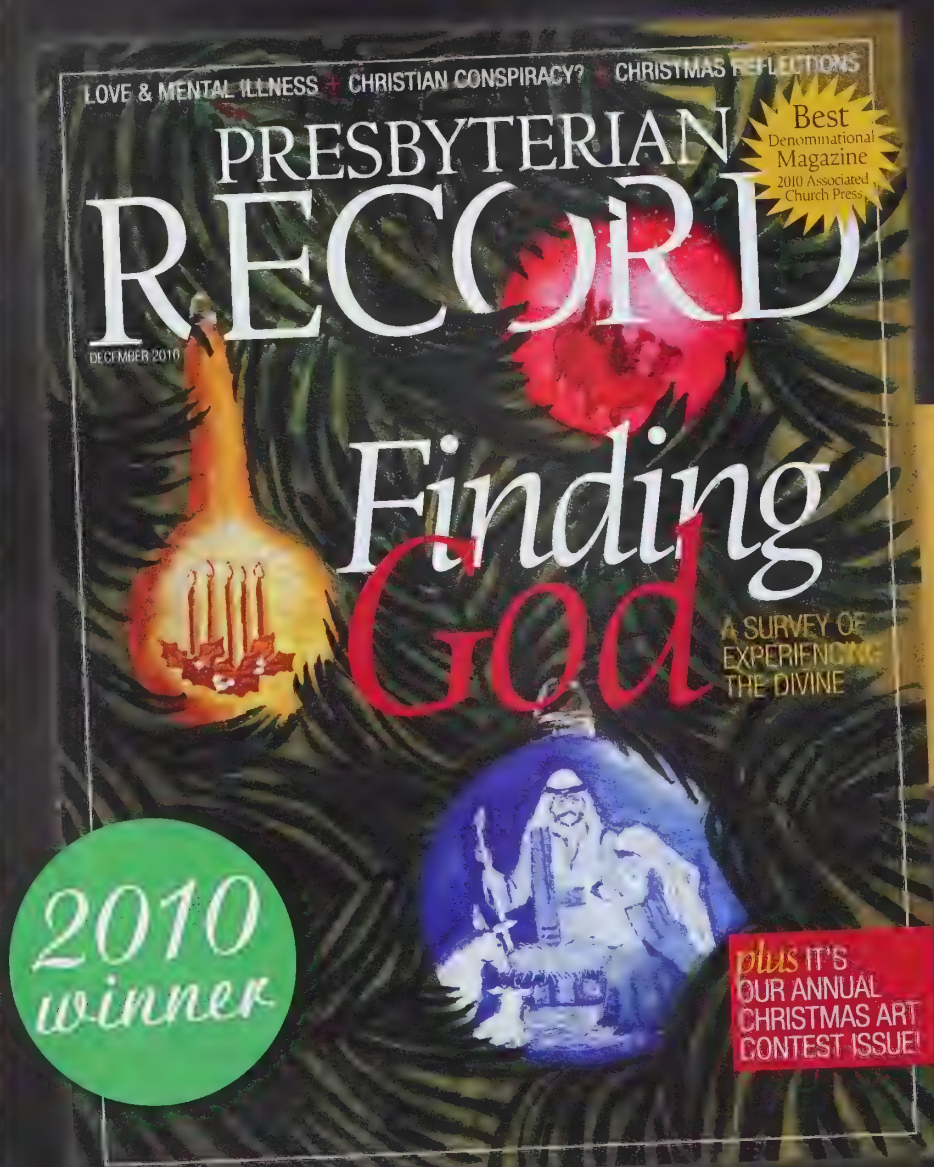
LOOKING IN SHOUTING OUT

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BE TRANSFORMED

Entry Deadline: November 1st, 2011

2011 Christmas Cover Art Contest

Each winter, we fill our December issue with artwork we receive from our annual Christmas Cover Art Contest. We'll choose one winning entry to run on our front cover, and many others will be featured throughout the entire magazine. **This contest is open to all ages and all styles of art.**



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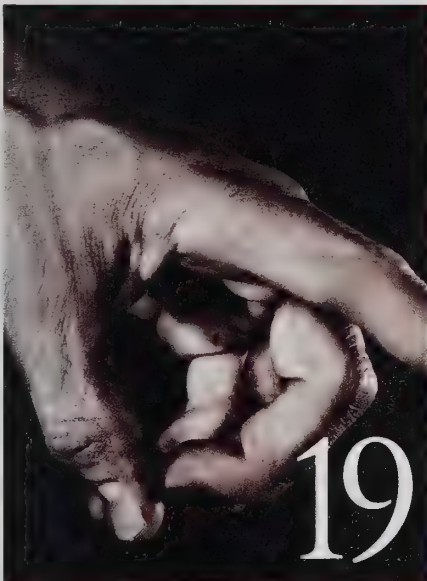
PRESBYTERIAN
RECORD

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

SEPTEMBER 2011



LOOKING IN SHOUTING OUT



On the Cover: Rev. Eunice Kalu, Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, helps lead worship at the Presbyterian Women's Gathering.

Illustration by Katy Lemay/Anna Goodson



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A Common Voice

SOCIETIES SHOULD JOIN FORCES TO SAVE THEMSELVES, AND THE CHURCH. **BY AMY MACLACHLAN**

Speaking at the recently held National Presbyterian Women's Gathering, Rev. Paulette Brown referenced five biblical women, whose father had died: "The legacy of these women [in Numbers 27:1-8] is a relentless attitude, a daring spirit to enter the most unlikely places, to confront the most sacred legislation that bound the community, to find their voices and use their voices for the sake of change."

These women weren't content with the status quo; they dared to speak, and in return, God ordered Moses to change a law in support of women like them.

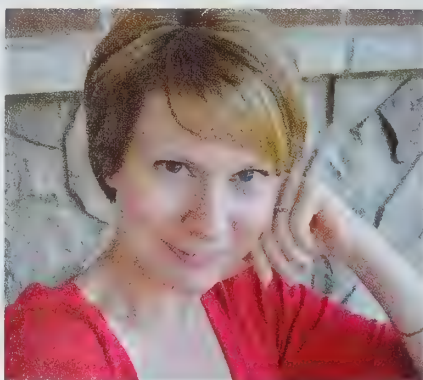
How's that for inspiring?

I left the Women's Gathering on that May long weekend wondering if that spirit had entered into the Presbyterian Church. The event, a joint venture of the Women's Missionary Society and the Atlantic Mission Society, not only sparked excitement, it emboldened and inspired women to find their voice, to be confident and courageous in their faith and in their womanhood, and to rely on each other for that courage.

But, behind the excitement are some sobering realities: Both societies are struggling to maintain their membership and their budgets.

In 1987, the AMS took "a bold step in opening up membership to men in recognition that mission work is the work of the whole church," according to president, Jennifer Whitfield. They changed their name to the Atlantic Mission Society, and today have executive members who are men. Still, they only have 811 full members in 89 auxiliaries—and these numbers drop just about every year.

The WMS's story is the same.



THE EVENT
EMBOLDENED AND
INSPIRED WOMEN TO
FIND THEIR VOICE ...
AND TO RELY
ON EACH OTHER

Created in 1914 (thanks to an amalgamation of three women's groups each created in or around 1864), they were almost 48,000-strong.

Of course, this was at a time when church attendance was the norm, and women had few options for real church involvement. Fair enough. But by the year 2000, membership dropped to just over 7,200, and today, it sits at less than 4,500. With a loss of 2,700 people in just over 10 years, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that in another 10, membership will be next to nil.

Both organizations are trying to figure out a way forward. President Joan Smith said the WMS began a visioning process in 2006. From that, they've created a Justice Committee hoping that the new focus will interest new women. Wonderful. But I'd like to see something more bold than that.

What about a national women's organization that meets the vast and varied needs of women in the church, instead of only focusing on mission?

"The next generation is very interested in supporting the work of mission—just not under the same organizational structure," said Whitfield. "We can do mission as individuals, auxiliaries and as a Society, which gives us a tremendous power. We need to step outside the boxes and see what this brings to each auxiliary and to our Society."

Yes, out-of-the-box thinking is important. But, may I suggest looking back to the past?

Presbyterian women came together more than 100 years ago to have a voice in their church—a church that otherwise kept them silent. I wonder: If the WMS and AMS got together, found a common voice among their members, and led a renewed passion and vigour not only in their societies, but throughout the church; perhaps real change would come, and they would inspire other women to join them in their quest.

The passion is there. The desire for something more exists. We felt it at the Women's Gathering.

The women of this church have a voice. They should use it. Together. For it is a terrible thing to waste. ■

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer. She has been with the magazine for eight years.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.8, SEPTEMBER 2011
ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

CONVENER **Michael Munnik**
board@presbyterianrecord.ca

ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

Carol McCormick
Phone: 905-833-6200, ext. 25
Fax: 905-833-2116
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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634
Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.
Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government
of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF)
for our publishing activities.

Subscription rates. GST/HST not included.

Every Home Plan: \$19.50

Individual: \$29.50

U.S.A. and foreign: \$39 **Single copies:** \$3.95

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by
the *Presbyterian Record* or The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

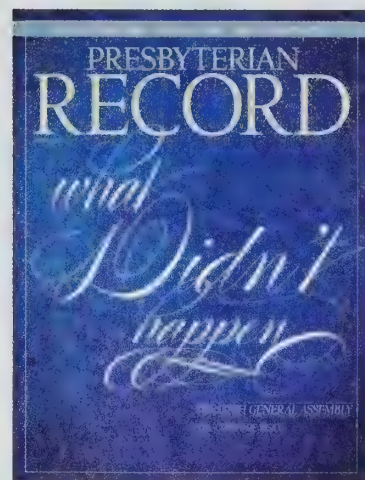
Address all correspondence and changes of address
(include label from magazine) to:

Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
Phone: (416) 441-1111; 1-800-619-7301
Fax: (416) 441-2825
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Letters



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Flowing of God's Guidance

Re July/August issue

Have we humbly asked for the Holy Spirit's guidance for the future of our denomination? Have we invoked the Holy Spirit as we present the gospel of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection in the personal lives of our people? Have we failed to see our inability to go it alone without God's guidance in the grassroots of our congregations and the personal lives of God's needy people? Have our sessions truly prayed for that guidance? Are they vessels through which God's love can flow? Size may not matter but will be influenced by following God's guidance and seeing the Holy Spirit work God's grace in the lives of our people. Then we will have leadership! I affirm "A Watershed Moment" by Dianne Ollerenshaw, especially the last paragraph. This issue of the *Record* is excellent.

BARBARA DRAFFIN, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

May I suggest that sometimes apparent inaction is actually action. Within our Christian community there is great wisdom. Therefore, I wish

to suggest that what some might consider a "mad dash" to action overlooks the great wisdom that resides within community. May I therefore remind you to recognize our scriptural imperative: "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) And: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Psalm 46:11)

REV. ROBERT FLINDALL, WOODSTOCK, ONT.

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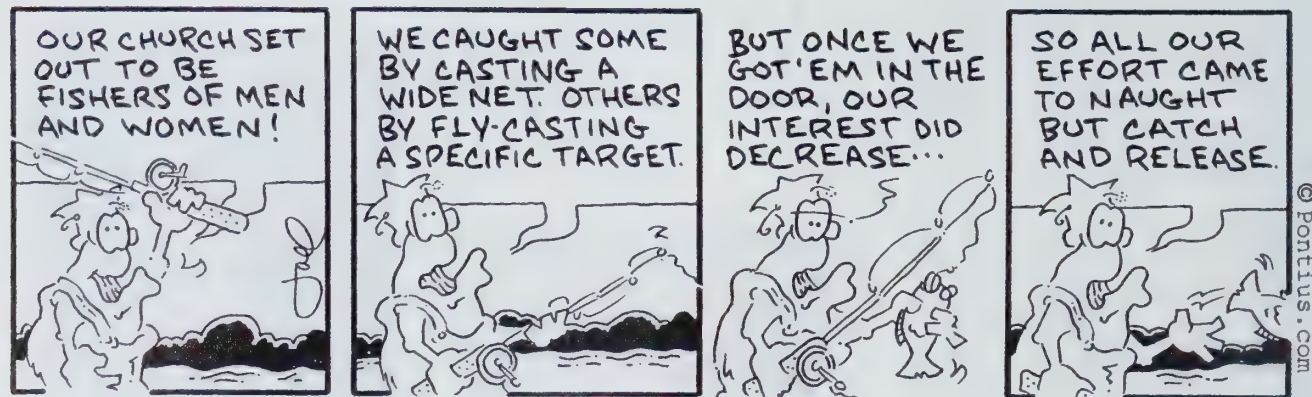
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We're dying. We're closing churches. We have no vision.

Me thinks our underwear is too tight. Since when did we think we had a lock on survival? Just look at the facts.

We don't have Presbyterians immigrating to Canada; we don't keep our young; and we don't evangelize. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure that out. Last year your columnist Andrew Faiz attended several conferences on the future of the church and the bottom line was: Get on with it—keep on keeping on! Outside of my window on Lake of the Woods there are sailboats going to windward by tacking to the breeze. So should we. Tack into the winds to reach our goals. Adapt our sails accordingly. Believe in who we are. And we will get there.

REV. ROD LAMB, KENORA, ONT.

Fall or Rise

Re Jesus In Islam, July/August 2009

I guess you need strong faith to believe that this is actually happening in our denomination—rejecting the authority and infallibility of the scriptures is the beginning of the fall of our denomination into oblivion. (Scholars would know the 'real meaning' of these two terms—they have nothing to do with the so-called 'fundamentalism accusation'!)

REV. PIETER GREYLING, ONLINE

As a Muslim, it is humbling to see the *Presbyterian Record* publish an article such as this. A truly unbiased article that does not judge one faith over the other but shows how religion can be a commonality among us all. Very well done, and much respect.

ABED DAGGAZ, ONLINE

Seeking the Rayner Prize

I have been looking around for information about the Rayner Prize for this year. What is the topic this year? Has the deadline for submissions already passed?

SCOTT FLEMMING, KNOX COLLEGE

Editor responds:

Sometime this fall, the Presbyterian Record and Armour Heights, Toronto, will be distributing the 2011/2012 Rayner question to the three colleges. Look for it.

Speak Out

In regard to the ongoing homosexual harangue and quotation of scriptures prohibiting the same, I would like to add some quotations that I am sure have inadvertently been overlooked. The following list should help to correct this imbalance: Leviticus 20:10-12, 14, 18 and 20.

This list provides plenty of room to condemn an even wider segment of the population. How is it that there is no finger pointing for these

misdemeanours which include punishments up to and including death? Is it that they are too close to home, or something the "normal population" participates in and as such are swept conveniently under the carpet? The list of biblical penalties is long and brutal and to select only those we do not understand for punishment seems grossly unfair to say the least.

WILLIAM JEFFREY, SARNIA, ONT.

When we talk about the rights of homosexuals in Ghana, we're not talking about the right to marry, as we do in the West. We're talking about their basic human rights. Genocide is strongly implied by Ghana's recent effort to round up, arrest, and get rid of all homosexuals. Because these actions have been largely caused by the Christian Council of Ghana, and because one of the Christian Council's most outspoken members is a Presbyterian minister, this massive tragedy falls upon the doorstep of the Presbyterian Church.

I'm calling upon the Presbyterian Church—the church in which I was raised—to please, please speak out against this injustice in the name of a higher ideal. Please do it loudly, publicly and clearly—in your magazines, in your congregations, in your newsletters, in your streets, to your local newspapers, and from

your pulpits. Your kinship with Presbyterians and other Christians around the world will make your voices louder than most others.

CURRIE BEDNARICK, WINDSOR, ONT.

Considering the delicacy of the issue of ordination of homosexuals as deacons, elders and ministers, I am surprised that any Christian with that orientation would even consider raising the issue. They are obviously more interested in what they consider their right than in the unity of the church.

In closing, read Luke 18:8. With people ignoring the scripture, that is what is to be expected.

GORDON MACKINTOSH,
PORT COQUITLAM, B.C.

I pray for the Presbyterian Church in Canada that it will not accept practicing homosexual ministers but will continue to engage morally upright ministers to be our guides. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a Christian church endeavouring to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ. Let's keep it that way.

LUELLA FOSTER, BIGGAR, SASK.

Reconciliation Presentation

Re Reconciliation Works, Community News, July/August

My Scottish ancestors were called by many different pejorative names including "the gypsies of the highlands," "the summer walkers," "tinkers," "hawkers" or as many know them "the Scottish travellers." Their story, like so many others, is one of prejudice and marginalization. In my presentation I also speak of other groups who have been marginalized: the Roma, the Jews and our First Nations. It would be my pleasure and honour, if invited, to have the opportunity to speak to any church within Canada on this very important topic. Please feel free to contact me at trchilds@hotmail.com if you have any questions or for further information.

TOM CHILDS, PETERBOROUGH, ONT.

List Those Gone to Glory

Several times a year the mailing from the Pension and Benefits Board includes a newsletter. On the back page are the names of ministers, spouses and diaconal ministers who are no longer with us. Occasionally an obituary is printed in the *Presbyterian Record*. Most of the time that is not the case. My question is, should presbyteries not see this as an opportunity to express thankfulness to God for the years of service given to His church by His servants?

HUGH APPEL, LONDON, ONT.

Corrections:

Rev. Arthur Van Seters was minister at Port Elgin, Sackville, and Dorchester, N.B. He was never minister at Port Elgin, Ont., as stated in the obituary on page 47.

Rev. Laura Cavanaugh is a member of the PWS&D committee, not the convenor, and minister at Knox, Victoria, not a member. Our apologies for the errors. ■

online extra

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

There were no dog days this summer; our readers were fully engaged in continuing conversations in the magazine. All the letters presented here have already been shortened; their full length is available online.

Also, there are some more wonderful conversations: On Knox's travels outside of Scotland; suggestions regarding the timeliness and expansiveness of obituaries; thoughts on the sanctity of the Bible; and, thoughts on Marshall McLuhan and the church.

Also, online, many other conversations are found at the end of various articles. You, too, could start one.

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The Vision Thing

A RESPONSE TO A RESPONSE. BY ANDREW FAIZ, WITH JEREMY BELLSMITH

I had lunch once with a very successful documentary filmmaker. We talked about the business side of making documentaries in Canada—there are a lot of barriers, it's a lot of work, there's very little money. He uttered a line that afternoon that for me has been a sort of mantra. I asked him if the trick is finding the right story, the right idea—that with the perfect idea, the process would somehow be easier. His response was, "The perfect idea is the one that can get funding."

One could write a PhD thesis unraveling this idea but here it is in a nutshell: If the idea that you love is getting no response, then it may not be the perfect idea you think. Seek out the idea to which people respond, perhaps that is the perfect one. (There are many other shadings here, of course, but let's ignore them for now.)

I was reminded of this mantra while reading the following letter from Rev. Jeremy Bellsmith, minister at Burns, Ashburn, Ont. Bellsmith worked at the national office at the Vine for a while till he answered the call at Burns about a year ago. He is here responding to several articles, including mine, about the vision thing, in the July/August *Record*:

"We don't need vision, but we do need it articulated. I appreciated the calls for vision and rethinking our structure at this year's General Assembly. It seems many want to know where our national church is headed and how we're going to get there. But, it's better to discern what God is already doing instead of trying to hear what God wants to do.

"Many congregations have already asked the second question. Across this country, Presbyterians are engaged



in mission, responding to the vision God has given. Each mission-shaped expression may look different from neighbouring congregations, but God's vision given to Presbyterians unites them all.

"Since God's vision is alive and

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being enacted in many Presbyterians, we can't say we lack it. The cry for a national vision can be answered by studying these local expressions as a whole. What are the similarities? What do the differences say about God's call to all of us? Once we know what God is doing among us, we'll see both where God's leading us and what needs changing to get us there.

"This grassroots approach to visioning fits for our polity better. Top-down visions—whether doubling in the '80s or the Flames initiative that followed—didn't receive large-scale buy-in. Even

the broadest top-down vision only articulates the voices of a few. We are diverse across regions and the theological spectrum so, excluding any voices can be injurious. We miss important parts of what God is saying to us. By hearing the stories of what God is already doing, not only is our variety affirmed as a gift from God, but each of us are encouraged to find our place within the work God does through Presbyterians.

"Our friends in the Church of England discovered this to be true. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, heard God speaking through local initiatives. He appointed a person to build a team that would gather these stories. The team saw in these efforts a movement and named it Fresh Expressions. From it, they gained a sense of direction and shared this vision with the national church. Then they linked it to their distinctive theology and made changes to the institution's structure that would facilitate everyone finding their own place within what God was doing.

"The Assembly Council has been charged with discerning vision, using broad consultation. Whatever form that process takes, I pray it will be a time of discerning what God is doing and letting it point the way forward. The resulting vision will be filled with hope: despite declining attendance, God is at work among us. This kind of vision focuses our activity on our purpose: continuing Christ's mission from our backyard to the ends of the earth. And, this vision assures every Presbyterian that they have a unique part to play in Christ's work around them." ■

Andrew Faiz is the *Record's* managing editor.



Refugees await tent assignments at the Dadaab refugee camp complex in Kenya.

Church Groups Provide Famine Relief in Eastern Africa

DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP IS "AN EFFICIENT AID MACHINE," SAYS PWS&D STAFFER. BY CONNIE PURVIS

THE SCENE AT THE WORLD'S largest refugee camp is "grim" but "not a place of despair" according to Presbyterian World Service and Development's communications coordinator, who visited eastern Africa from July 25 to August 10.

Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya's North Eastern Province has been flooded by a stream of Somali refugees seeking food, water and shelter since a multi-year drought destroyed crops and livestock in the Horn of Africa.

"The grim pictures on the news are true: I have seen children that

'The grim pictures on the news are true: I have seen children that embody what a heartbreak must look like'

embody what a heartbreak must look like," Barb Summers blogged from the camp on Aug. 5. She described a desolate plain densely covered with tents

and dome-shaped *tukuls* "stretching out nearly as far as the eye can see," and lines of people "in tattered clothes with sunken eyes, emaciated, malnourished and exhausted" at its well-guarded gates.

The drought has left about 11.3 million people in the Horn of Africa in need of assistance, and southern Somalia is the hardest hit with an estimated 3.7 million people—or half the population—in need.

However, humanitarian aid has been severely limited in southern areas controlled by Al-Shabab, a ➤



militant group that has maintained bans on many major aid agencies including the UN's World Food Program. Hungry Somalis are fleeing to neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya, or to the government-controlled capital of Mogadishu.

At Dadaab, a camp that grows by about 1,000 people each day, Summers said calm pervades.

"It's a tale of people having gone through unbelievable circumstances but they have arrived!" she told the *Record*. "I've never seen such a well-organized, dedicated and efficient 'aid machine' and the coolest part is that Lutheran World Federation, our partners there, are the ones that oversee the whole thing."

Through its partnership with the ACT Alliance, the Presbyterian Church's aid department is providing food, water, shelter and other essentials to 300,000 refugees in Dadaab

and 10,000 members of the host community, and plan to establish emergency education and livelihood recovery programs.

In the Goro district of Ethiopia, another area hurt by famine, it is working with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Canadian Lutheran World Relief to provide more than 1,900 tonnes of food to 18,350 people. Summers also visited Ethiopia as part of her monitoring trip.

The government of Canada will match donations for famine relief made by Canadians to eligible charities until Sept. 16. The government's donation will be administered separately by the Canadian International Development Agency.

For updates on PWS&D's work, and to read Barb Summers' blog, see presbyterian.ca/pwsd. ■

Connie Purvis is the Record's staff writer.

Community News

Stories and Celebrations at Inuvik TRC Event

TWO HUNDRED KILOMETRES north of the Arctic Circle, in the land of the midnight sun, Principal Clerk Stephen Kendall and seminary student John Constant represented the Presbyterian Church in Canada at the second national Truth and Reconciliation event in Inuvik, N.W.T., from June 28 to July 1.

In addition to hearing residential school survivors describe their experiences to the commissioners and their staff, the church delegates participated in the proceedings, and offered apologies on behalf of the denomination.

"It is important that our church say to survivors that even though we had no schools in the north, we did participate in the residential schools legacy, we apologize for the harm we

have caused, and we are committed to walking together with them on a journey of healing," Stephen Kendall wrote on a blog he kept over the course of the four-day event.

Constant, a Cree man and a worker at Flora House, part of Winnipeg Inner City Missions, shared some of his experiences working with children at Flora House, and spoke of the support he has received from the church as he studies at the Vancouver School of Theology.

The duo presented a copy of *One in the Spirit*, a book produced by the Justice Ministries department, to be included in a bentwood box that travels with the commissioners and houses mementos of residential school-related journeys.

To celebrate the birth of Canada

on Canada Day, church representatives also helped ice 700 cupcakes for residential school survivors, who did not celebrate their birthdays as they grew up in residential schools.

The PCC operated 11 residential schools in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario; four closed before 1925 and five were transferred to the United Church as a part of church union. The remaining two schools in Kenora, Ont., and Birtle, Man., were eventually transferred to the federal government along with all remaining residential schools in 1969. ■

—C.Purvis

Making History in the Archives

RESEARCHERS HIRED by Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and

the Presbyterian Church's archivists posed for a photo as the very first document was scanned for the Indian Residential Schools National Research Centre.

The PCC's was the first of 88 church and government archives to be visited by a TRC team; eventually, several million documents are likely to be produced and scanned as part of the project.

"Through our archives' comprehensive and significant collection of Indian residential school-related documents dating from 1885 to 2011, we are able to contribute to the overall story of our denomination's involvement with this legacy to the TRC," archivist Kim Arnold wrote to the *Record*. "It is hoped that much learning and healing becomes possible in the years to come through the accessibility of these documents by all researchers, most notably the survivors and their family members."

The creation of a national research centre is part of the TRC's mandate,



TRC staffers Michelle Rose, Jacqueline Vincent and Martin McGerry pose with PCC archivists Kim Arnold and Bob Anger as Melissa Knapp and Kathleen Zorzella prepare to scan the first document for the future TRC research centre.

although it has yet to determine what form the centre will take. ■ —C.Purvis

Picton Pitches Pews

CHURCH PEWS are a thing of the past at St. Andrew's, Picton, Ont. As part of a \$70,000 sanctuary renovation that was completed this Easter, the congrega-

tion opted to sell off their pews—raising \$3,000 in the process—and create a versatile, open-concept space.

"We were looking at everything, including furniture and architecture, and asking, does this serve God right now? Does it serve the community?" said Rev. Lynne Donovan. "Everything in your church sends a message. And churches usually err on the side of clutter."

The congregation engaged an architect for the redesign, aiming to preserve the beauty of a building Donovan describes as a "grey brick church that looks like it was built on the moors," while adapting it to modern tastes and making it more useful for the community. The former chancel area became a stage, chairs have replaced pews, glass doors have replaced wooden ones, and some traditional sanctuary features—such as hymn boards—have been removed.

The bulk of the funds for the renovation came from a bequest left to the church in April 2008; the congregation raised an additional \$7,000 over and above the \$3,000 provided through the pew sales.

The church is set to premiere a new one-act Christmas Eve opera by composer Victor Davies; it was chosen predominantly because of the versatility of its sanctuary. The church also hosts concerts, a glee club and an afterschool program for girls at risk. ■ —C.Purvis

Ten Thousand Villages Celebrates 65 Years

TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES, a string of non-profit, fair trade stores, traces its origins back to one woman.

Sixty-five years ago, Edna Ruth Byler, an American Mennonite, launched a fair trade movement when she began selling embroidery from Puerto Rico to her friends and neighbours. She bought items at prices that would allow artisans to support their families with the proceeds of their sales.

Others joined her, and the initiative was eventually taken up by the Mennonite Central Committee to become a string of craft sales and shops. Ten Thousand Villages is its most recent incarnation.

The stores are staffed predominantly by volunteers and run by local boards. There are 48 locations across Canada, including a Presbyterian-supported one in Montreal, and one in Picton, Ont., which was spearheaded by a group from St. Andrew's. ■ —C.Purvis



TEN THOUSAND
VILLAGES®

B.C. Minister Turns Political

A VANCOUVER MINISTER is taking her pastoral care skills into politics. Rev. Jane Swatridge, minister at West Vancouver, said it was her ability to listen—along with an eclectic set of skills—that made MP John Weston offer her a job as his executive assistant.

In her new position, she will be responsible for coordinating three constituency offices, listening to people in a riding she calls “massive geographically and demographically,” and acting on behalf of the Conservative MP. “He describes me as his ‘alter ego,’” she said. “When he has to be in Ottawa, I’m him.”

Before she entered ordained ministry 12 years ago, Swatridge took her undergraduate degree in political science, worked in legal publishing, and then in marketing and advertising.

“This is the culmination of every-

thing I’d done. One of the reasons I want to do this is because of the magnitude of the changes you can make in people’s lives—and you can do it in good time.”

The riding spans six coastal communities, and boasts the longest name in Canada: West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. ■—C.Purvis

Integrated Camping Walk

ON SEPT. 17, CAMP CAIRN will be among 36 Ontario camps participating in Walk a Mile in My Shoes.

The pledge-based walkathon raises funds each year to support Reach for the Rainbow, an organization that partners with summer camps to provide integration programs for children and adults with disabilities.

Money raised by each participant is divided equally between Reach for the Rainbow and the camp the participant represents. Last year Cairn received enough pledges to build an accessible ramp to their health centre building.

For more information about the walkathon, visit reachfortherainbow.ca/walkamile. ■—EW

Kouwenberg “Retires” to VST

AFTER MORE THAN 38 years in pastoral ministry, Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg said he was “excited to be going back to school.” He began work Sept. 1 as the part-time Presbyterian director of denominational formation at St. Andrew’s Hall, the church’s college at the Vancouver School of Theology.

“I have always been interested in theological education, both as a student at Knox College in the early 1970’s, thinking I would go on to do graduate work but ending up very satisfied as a general practitioner pastor,” said the former moderator, who has served on the governing boards of all three of the church’s colleges.

He steps into the new position after “retiring” from his pastorate at Calvin, Abbotsford, B.C., where he served for 18 years.

He will be taking the place of Rev. Dr. Glen Davis, another past moderator, and a former missionary and general secretary, who retired from the position in June. ■—C.Purvis

Lori Ransom Joins TRC Team

THE CHURCH’S HEALING and reconciliation animator bid farewell to national offices, and joined the ranks of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in September.

“I am very excited that this opportunity will allow me to continue the work which I have grown even more passionate about through these past five years of work for the Presbyterian Church in Canada: healing and reconciliation with indigenous peoples,” Lori Ransom wrote to the *Record*. “And I am delighted that by working with the TRC, I should be able to maintain working relationships with many of the colleagues in the PCC and the ecumenical and aboriginal partners with whom I have been privileged to work in recent years.”

Ransom will begin an 18-month assignment with the TRC on Sept. 19.

David Phillips will take on the position of healing and reconciliation animator part-time. He served on the healing and reconciliation advisory committee since its first meeting in December 2006. He will also continue in his current part-time position with Canadian Ministries/the Vine. ■—C.Purvis

Citizens for Public Justice Bids Farewell to Founder

GERALD VANDEZANDE, a Christian activist and founder of Citizens for Public Justice, passed away on July 16 at the age of 77.

Throughout his life, he championed a multitude of causes, and received the Order of Canada in 2001 in recognition of his “powerful and respected voice for social justice.”

He founded CPJ, a Christian social justice organization, in 1963 and continued to be active in the group until his death. ■—C.Purvis

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World News

WCC General Secretary Offers Condolences to Norway

WORLD COUNCIL of Churches General Secretary Rev. Dr. Olav Fyske Tveit penned a letter of condolence to the Christian Council of Norway after the country suffered two violent attacks on July 22.

Tveit, a native of Norway, had just left Oslo on the day a government building in that city was bombed, leaving eight people dead. A second attack on Utoya Island slew 68 more

‘We recommit ourselves to join our forces and values to promote a world free of hatred’

when the bomber, who was dressed as a police officer, opened fire at a political camp for young people.

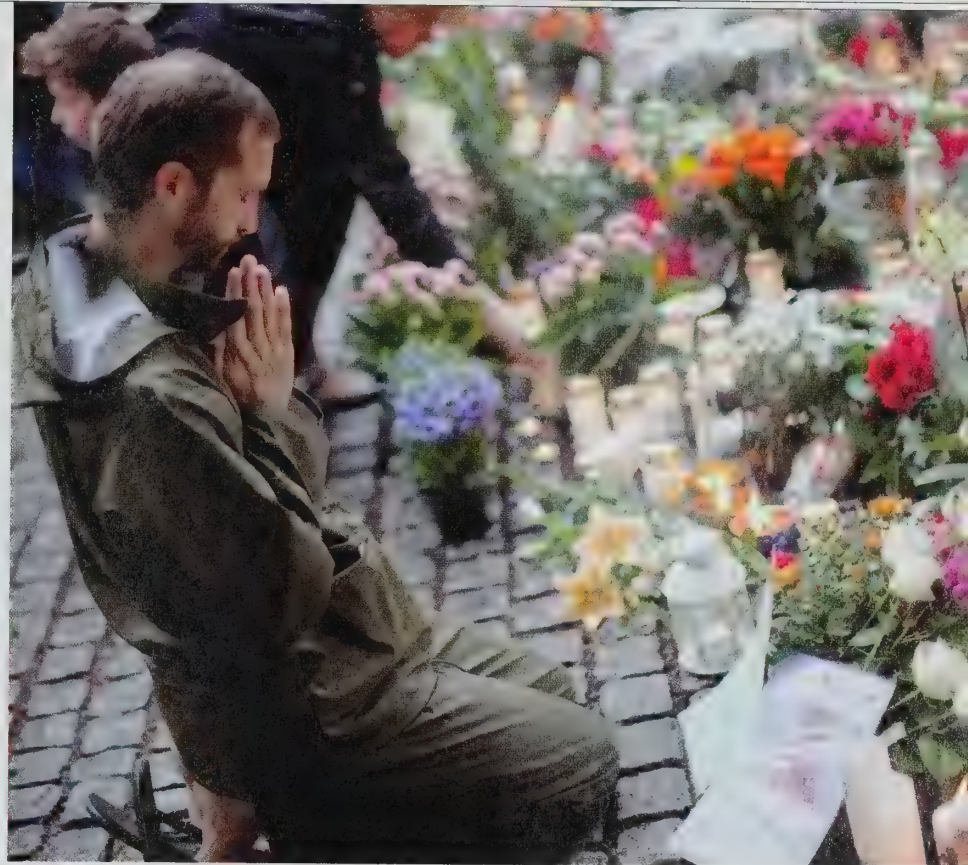
“These horrible acts of violence have shaken us,” Tveit wrote, but added that the attacks had also caused the WCC to “recommit ourselves to join our forces and values to promote a world free of hatred.”

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a member of the WCC. ■—EW

Racehorse Raises \$7,000 for Malawi

PASTOR STEPHEN, a racehorse named for the senior minister of Allentown Presbyterian Church in New Jersey, U.S.A., is raising funds for Malawi with every race he wins.

The horse's owners, after being approached by members of the church, agreed to donate five per cent of his winnings this year to Villages in Partnership, an organization at work in Malawi. It was founded by the horse's



Mourners have been gathering at the two sites of the violent attacks in Norway last July, which left 77 people dead (one died later in hospital)—many of them youth.

namesake, Rev. Stephen Heinzel-Nelson and his family after they spent a year in the African nation.

The pledged donations from Pastor Stephen's winnings reached \$7,000 by the end of July. ■—EW with files from the Monmouth and Middlesex Counties Examiner

Election Reform in India

THE ELECTION COMMISSION of India praised election guidelines created by the church-led Mizoram People's Forum at a consultation on electoral reforms in June, citing them as an example for the whole country.

Presbyterian churches in Mizoram, a small Indian state with a Christian majority, began campaigning for

electoral reform in 2006, spurred by the rampant corruption during the 2003 election. In 2008 they released an election code of conduct that forbade wasteful campaign spending and door-to-door campaigning, a practice that had involved intimidation and bribery. According to Chief Election Commissioner S. Y. Quraishi, the ban on door-to-door campaigning helped curb corruption in the 2008 election.

While the MPF was initiated by the Presbyterian Church in India, the anti-corruption campaign is now an ecumenical project, involving Catholics, Methodists and Buddhists as well as secular women's, youth and social action groups. ■—EW with files from the Council for World Mission ➤

Evangelical Author John Stott Dies

REV. JOHN STOTT, a prolific author and a pivotal figure in 20th-century evangelical Christianity, passed away July 27 at the age of 90.

The Anglican minister and author of more than 50 books is often cited as one of the most influential voices shaping modern evangelism. He chaired the committee that drafted the Lausanne Covenant, a statement that helped unite evangelicals across the globe, and planned the first global Lausanne conference in 1974 alongside well-known preacher Billy Graham.

A believer in intellectual Christianity that's integrated into all facets of a person's life, Stott founded a number of organizations aimed at encouraging thoughtful evangelical study. Among them are Langham Partnership International (also known

as John Stott Ministries in the U.S.A.) which helps train ministers, fund doctoral scholarships and subsidize evangelical books for pastors, students and seminaries in the developing world, and the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, which aims to equip laypeople and churches.

During his career he turned down offers to advance in the Anglican Church's hierarchy, opting instead to remain at All Souls Church in London's West End, the church in which he grew up. He was rector for 25 years, and rector emeritus from 1975 until his death. He involved himself in a number of British evangelical groups, and served as chaplain to the Queen from 1959 until 1991.

Stott's books include *Basic Christianity*, *The Cross of Christ* and *The Radical Disciple* among many others. ■ —with files from the Religion News Service and Langham Partnership International

government had failed to meet with the churches to discuss issues facing the impoverished south African nation, and urged "all demonstrators to avoid resorting to violence."

During a two-day protest on July 20 and 21, demonstrators rallied in Malawi's three major cities—Mzuzu in the north, the capital Lilongwe in the central region, and Blantyre in the south—to protest rising prices, shortages of fuel and foreign currency, and to call for the resignation of President Bingu wa Mutharika.

Police and troops cracked down on protestors, killing at least 18 and injuring about 40.

"While the Malawi Council of Churches would have wished that there were more round-table discussions to resolve the outstanding issues, we nevertheless urge all demonstrators to avoid resorting to violence or impinging on other people's rights as they demonstrate," the MCC said in a media statement.

Mutharika was elected in 2004 and again in 2009, but is barred from seeking a third term in elections scheduled for 2014. ■ —with files from the Malawi Democrat and the BBC

Malawi Churches Urge End to Violence

IN THE WAKE OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT protests that left at least 18 dead, the Malawi Council of Churches expressed its disappointment that the

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The Other Six Days Got Demons?

WE CAN HELP! BY BRADLEY CHILDS

MAN OF INTEREST

Got demons? For 20 years, Bob Larson was the host of a very popular two-hour Christian radio program. Over the airwaves he would exorcise demons (usually with names like “cigarette,” “molestation,” “lust” or the like). Today he still garners a huge following on T.V. reruns, twitter and has a new reality T.V. show. He is unique, to say the least. In his book, *UFOs and the Alien Agenda*, Bob attempts to show how alien visitors to earth are actually—you guessed it—demons. You can also watch tons of “exorcisms” on Bob’s very own YouTube channel, through a link on his website. Bob, for some reason, loves to interview the “demons” before helping people and you can see Bob “burn” people by putting a Bible on their foreheads. But that’s not the best part. Years ago I saw Bob live as he lassoed the possessed with an invisible spiritual rope. Like I said, he’s unique. Oh, and did I forget to mention that for US\$59, Bob will send you a CD teaching you how to exorcise demons at home? Or you can purchase his new book of “Demon Proofing Prayers” for a nominal fee. Ah ... and one more thing, for just US\$4.99, you can take Bob’s “Demon Test” here to see if you’ve got one.

FIND IT @ boblarrison.org and demonstest.com

VIDEO CLIP

Larry Norman is sometimes called “The Godfather of Christian Rock.” In the late 50s, after his father banned him from listening to “the devil’s rock and roll” (Elvis to be specific), Norman began writing his own version of rock with a then-contemporary Christian twist. His music brought about a lot of controversy because of his insistence that hymns were not the only way to glorify God in music. Before his death, Larry recorded over 100 Christian music albums. His talent gained him numerous awards and even got him into the Grammy’s tribute section. Still, he’s perhaps best known for his song, “*Why Should the Devil Have all the Good Music?*” **FIND IT @** [Search youtube.com](http://Search.youtube.com) for “Larry Norman why should the devil” and larrynorman.com

WEBSITE

Concerned about the kind of music your kids are listening too? Are they confused by Satan’s tricks? Do they actually

believe there is such a thing as Christian rock? Well you’re in luck. The good people at Satan’s Music can direct you to all kinds of helpful pages like: The Jonas Brothers: Satanic to the Core, where they reverse-play the lyrics to reveal demonic messages hidden in pop songs. You can also find out about other demonic artists like “so-called Christian artist” Michael W. Smith or see the evil sides of Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash, or that she-devil Selena Gomez. **FIND IT @** jesus-is-savior.com and click on “Devil’s Music.”

BOOK

I would be remiss if I did not present at least one intellectually worthy piece of information on the subject of demonology. With that in mind, I point our faithful readers to a book well worth reading:

Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons by Sydney H. T. Page. Although not the newest

book on this topic, *Powers of Evil* is perhaps the best single work on this subject. More to the point, it is one of those rare finds that’s not hokey. In fact, it’s an extremely well put together work on the way the devil, demons and possession are presented throughout the Bible. It’s done with extreme care, taking into consideration a multitude of perspectives and understandings of biblical interpretation. So order this book, turn off your computer and read something that’s both faithful to the text and intelligent.

FIND IT @ amazon.com ■

POWERS of EVIL

A Biblical Study of Satan & Demons

SYDNEY H.T. PAGE



Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

Pastors of Excellence

HELPING CLERGY ALONG THEIR JOURNEY. BY CHUCK CONGRAM



I truly believe that if it had not been for the experience of Pastors of Excellence I would have left ministry long ago!" An overstatement at best, right? Perhaps you might think so until you look at the statistics. In North America each month, 1,500 people leave ministry—we're not talking retirement here; these are people who just up and quit. In addition, 50 per cent of those who stay see themselves as so discouraged they seriously consider packing it in, and 70 per cent report feeling depressed on a regular

basis. Recognizing the urgency of this need, Dr. Terry Wardle and Dr. Richard Parrott of the Sandberg Leadership Center at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio launched a pilot project in 2003 entitled Pastors of Excellence. Recently, one of the program's previous participants suggested it might be better titled "Broken and dying" or "Help, I'm in ministry and drowning." Rather than centering on the development of more ministry skills, this program is designed to provide transformational training that focuses on pastoral health and excellence.

I was one of two Canadians chosen to partner with 18 colleagues in the United States for the initial round of this program. By design, three small groups of six pastors travelled together through a series of three-day retreats built around a model of "journeys"—inward, upward, outward, and forward. This experience, at times both difficult and painful, was life-transforming and life-giving for me. Affectionately, we referred to it as "being dragged through a knothole backwards."

Others have described it this way:

"PoE opened my eyes to an internal journey I was previously unaware of. Things that were going on inside of me might well have undone the work I was doing in the Kingdom had I not begun to pay greater attention to the heart and spirit."

"When I entered the program ... I was carrying years of unresolved wounds from ministry and life that drove my dysfunctions and continued to make me and those closest to me sick. Ministry was no longer life-giving; it was life-taking and I was quietly dying on the inside."

"I came into PoE with some awareness of its potential impact because several of my colleagues had been through a season with the program. What I didn't anticipate was that God was setting me up to be impacted in ways that I would not normally allow!"

Prior to engaging in the program, participants are asked to complete a series of assessments designed to paint a clearer picture of an individual's personality and stress-processing style, as well as insight into behavioural style—both positive and negative—which impacts the relational aspects of ministry and leadership. In looking back on his personal experience with PoE, Rev. Sean Howard, minister at

Nassagaweya, Campbellville, Ont., summarizes it this way: "I feel like I have a handle on some of my more obvious dysfunctions and they're not impacting me in my life and ministry to nearly the extent they once were."

In addition to the intensive self-examination and self-discovery, deep and valued relationships have been formed. "PoE has given me two friends with whom I can be completely honest and open about what's going on in my life," added Sean when asked about the ongoing benefit of the experience.

This experience, at times both difficult and painful, was life-transforming and life-giving. We referred to it as 'being dragged through a knothole backwards'

Originally funded by a \$1-million grant from the Lilly Foundation, the PoE program has afforded 21 ministers from our denomination—ranging from Ontario through Vancouver Island—the privilege of involvement. This represents one of the largest denominational groups involved in PoE from either Canada or the United States. When asked why they would recommend that someone become involved, alumni respond with statements such as, "Paying attention to the internal journey will transform and strengthen whatever ministry you are leading, not to mention your family and your character." Or this: "PoE will give you insight into yourself, your family and your church and help you map a path towards healing ministry." Donna Dawson, clerk of session for Grace Church, Orleans, Ont., notes that not only has their pastor come to a healthier place in his life and made greater efforts towards better self care, but, "The congregation has moved towards being a safe community—a place of sanctuary

where everyone can feel safe to seek healing for their woundedness by drawing closer to God."

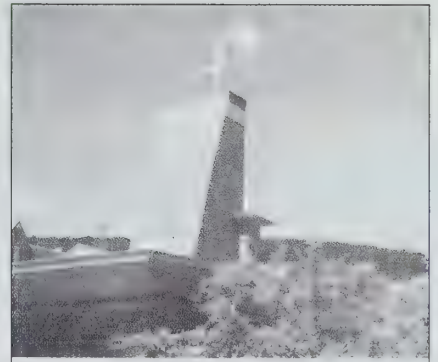
From the feedback I have received from previous participants, it appears the PoE program is addressing two critical areas in the life of a pastor—a hunger and a need. "There is a hunger in us as pastors that is completely unfulfilled by academia. There is a cry in us for spiritual leadership and we feel that void and so travel to where we can find refuge and leadership," said one participant. Or as Sean Howard observes,

"The reality is that clergy are just as prone to problems as everyone else, perhaps even more so. With the high rate of clergy burnout, dysfunction and lack of spiritual vitality, PoE may be what your pastor needs more than anything else, whether he or she realizes it or not."

Yet the deepest longing among leadership in the program is not just for transformed pastors, but for transformed congregations and communities. Rev. Dan MacKinnon, minister at Grace, Orleans, Ont., summarizes it best by saying, "As a result of PoE, there are ministers across Canada embracing a form of authenticity that is being expressed in wholeness and healthy ministry, whose influence is now spreading to and through their congregations."

For additional information visit seminary.ashland.edu/community/conted-poe.html. ■

Rev. Dr. Chuck Congram is pastor in association at St. Andrew's, Lakeshore, Ont.



Head

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Letter from Malawi

Harvesting Hope

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM TEACHES FARMERS ABOUT HEALTHY CROPS AND COMMUNITIES.

BY RACHEL BEZNER KERR

In February, I visited the Soils, Food and Healthy Communities program at Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi to do research on farmers' perspectives on climate change. Presbyterian World Service and Development and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank are longstanding supporters of this program. The rains were a topic of conversation; they had started late, and then stopped abruptly for a month before returning in earnest. As maize is the dominant crop here and requires a lot of rainfall, people worry about reaping a decent harvest.

The SFHC program focuses on sustainable agricultural methods and nutrition, and part of this work includes education about climate change. We held a workshop with farmers last year, and gave an overview of scientific understandings about climate change. It was the first time they were exposed to these ideas, and they were shocked. They had observed changes in rainfall but had attributed them to local deforestation.

One female farmer angrily said, "If you are telling me that your country's cars and factories are causing these changes in the rains, then what is your government doing about it?" Her question made me reflect on the responsibility all Canadians have to address their greenhouse gas emissions, as well as support Africans in adapting to this new reality. Not only is Canada one of the highest per-capita greenhouse gas emitters, but our federal government has played a negative role in global climate change negotiations.

Learning about climate change has motivated Malawian farmers to



Maria Mayuni and her husband amongst their new crops, supported by the Soils, Food and Healthy Communities program.

organize tree planting, grow more drought-tolerant crops and legume intercrops, which improve soil quality under dry conditions. At times I feel discouraged about making tiny changes to a huge problem, but I become hopeful when I see a big field of sorghum—a local drought-tolerant grain—and hear a farmer's enthusiasm about her efforts.

Maria Mayuni is one of these farmers who gives me hope. She is very proud of her crop diversification. "I want to be known as a sorghum farmer," she says with a smile. Her neighbours are also experimenting with intercropping legumes and sorghum with Maria's advice. It is encouraging to see how Maria's increased knowledge, along with support from the SFHC program, is leading her to improve her food security, her soils, and to share that knowledge in her community.

But there are worrying signs for the future. The political and economic situation is worsening, with Malawi's president showing increasing signs of authoritarianism. People are frustrated

by increasing prices and fuel shortages, and blame government mismanagement. Protests have been organized by civil society organizations, after a list of demands presented to the government was ignored.

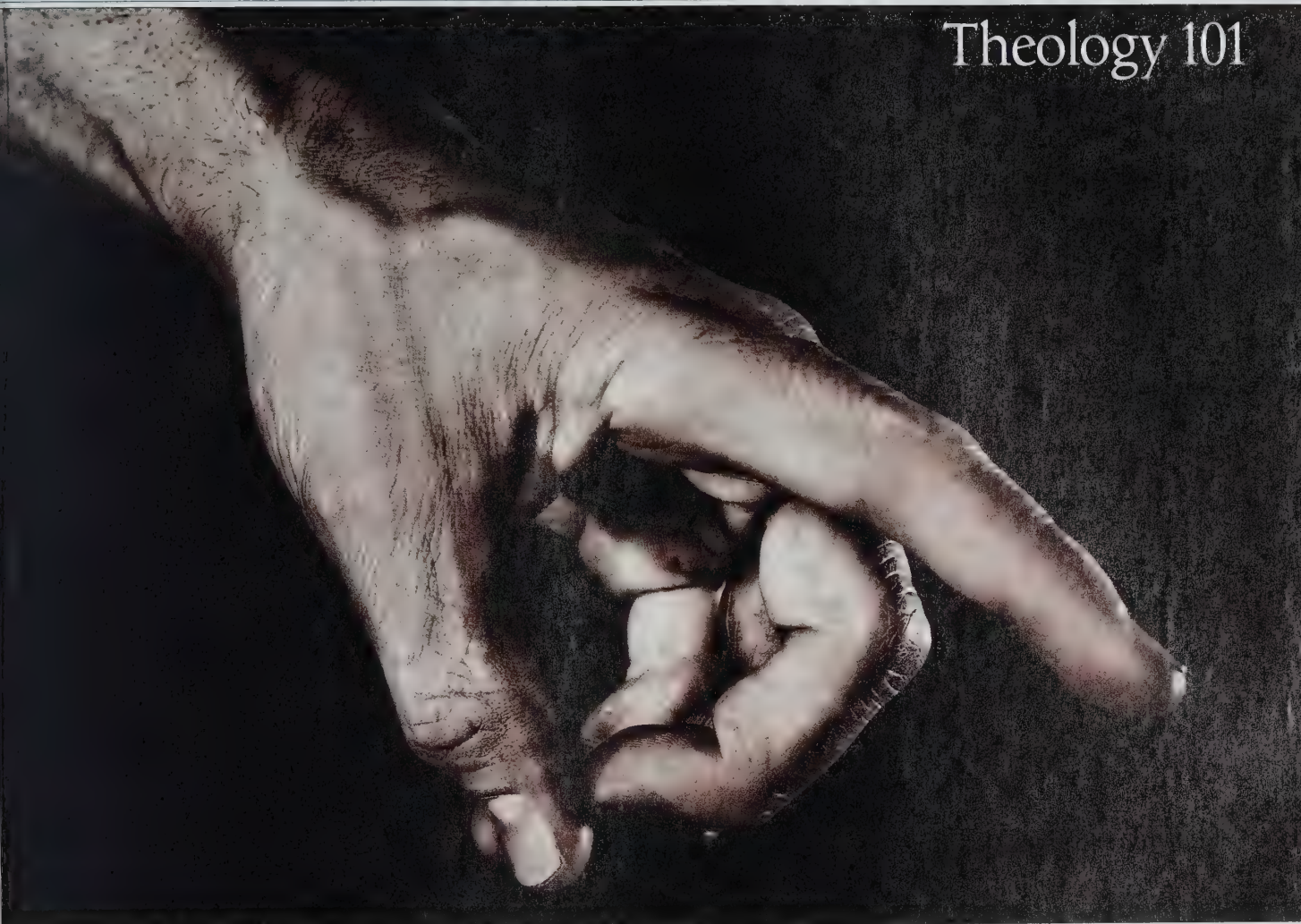
Please pray that Malawians can find peaceful ways for change, pray for Malawian farmers as they adapt to a changing climate, and pray that Canadians will address climate change both individually and as a nation, so others do not have to pay the price for our high standard of living.

Note: Since this letter was written, Malawi saw widespread protests on July 20 and 21, during which the police and army used force, people burned government buildings, and at least 18 people were killed. Hundreds were arrested. The UN called on the government to investigate, but the government has denied any wrongdoing. A second protest was called for Aug. 17, but was cancelled. ■

Rachel Bezner Kerr teaches at the University of Western Ontario, has served as SFHC research coordinator for 10 years, and is a member at Elmwood, London, Ont.

Noteworthy

PWS&D's Soils, Food and Healthy Communities program was highlighted in the News section of the July/August *Record*, and was also in a short article entitled, *Healthy Communities in Malawi* in May 2009. Today, with the support of CFGB, PWS&D is supporting the SFHC program with \$100,000 a year to help deal with the impact of climate change and drought in the area.



Solas Not Solos— By Faith Alone

WITH THE HELP OF GRACE. BY WILLIAM KLEMPA

The 16th-century reformers—Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox and others—were derisively nicknamed, “the Sola-ists.” They distilled the essence of the gospel in five short Latin slogans each prefaced by the word *sola* meaning only, solely or exclusively.

This five-fold slogan was: *sola gratia, sola fide, sola scriptura, solo Christo, soli Deo gloria* (grace alone, faith alone, scripture alone, Christ alone, to God’s glory alone).

A clearly polemical purpose lay behind this summary. Scholastic theology spoke of grace and reason, faith and ►

Specifically, Luther based his teaching on Romans 3:28: 'For ... a person is justified by faith apart from works of law'

works, scripture and tradition, Christ and the mediation of Mary and the saints, God's glory and papal glory. The reformers' rebuttal was to confess grace only, faith only, scripture only, Christ only, God's glory only. It was not that reason, works and tradition had no value; the reformers argued that they were simply not of equal value.

"By faith alone" is then part of this larger formula and is rightly understood only in terms of the other *solas*. Thus when Luther affirmed that justification is "by faith alone" he meant "by grace through faith alone." As Calvin said, faith is simply an empty vessel that receives God's grace. Important though it is, it makes no contribution to God's work of salvation.

There is a second significant conse-

quence. Luther spoke of justification by grace through faith alone as "the doctrine on which the Church stands or falls." "If we lose the doctrine of justification," Luther wrote, "we lose simply everything." Yet while this doctrine has a dignity of its own as part of a closely connected complex of doctrines—grace, foreknowledge, predestination, calling, glorification—(Romans 8:28-30), nevertheless, it is not to be made into an absolute principle. It testifies to and upholds a more central doctrine: Christ alone. Ultimately, it is on Christ alone that the Church stands or falls.

Luther's emphasis on grace alone, faith alone proceeded from and was informed by his "theology of the cross." Contrasted with what he called a "theology of glory" (which he characterized as an attempt to climb up to God on the ladder of works and reason), he emphasized God's gracious condescension in the humility, suffering and death of Christ on the cross. The theology of glory puffs up, he argued; the theology of the cross humbles us, for salvation is God's sole work.

In articulating the five *solas*, the reformers believed they were revisiting and fighting again Paul's battle against the ideas of salvation by works

in Romans, Galatians and Ephesians, of false traditions in Colossians and of other mediators in the anonymous author's Letter to the Hebrews.

Specifically, Luther based his teaching on Romans 3:28: "For ... a person is justified by faith apart from works of law," and on Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest anyone should boast."

Are works then superfluous? Yes!—as far as earning salvation; No!—as far as the Christian life is concerned. A lively faith works gratefully and untiringly by love to produce good works. "Faith ... is the alone instrument of justification," the *Westminster Confession* states majestically, "yet is it not alone ... but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love." —James ii, 17, 22, 26 (XI, II).

"By grace alone through faith alone" has broken through with special force at critical times in the church's history: in the fifth century with Augustine; in the 12th with Bernard of Clairvaux; in the 16th with Luther and Calvin; in the 18th with the Wesleys; and in the 20th with Karl Barth.

Not to rely on grace and faith alone is Christianity's failing. "You're worth it," proclaims the L'Oréal cosmetic ad. It's natural to assume: my religious sensitivity, my splendid spirituality, my superb generosity are deserving before God. Luther of all people confessed: "I myself have now been preaching ... [justification by faith alone] for almost 20 years and still ... [I want] to deal with God so that I may contribute something and He will have to give me His grace in exchange"

We are summoned as the Presbyterian Church and individually to rediscover and to hold firmly to the gospel of the five *solas*! ■

Rev. Dr. William Klempa is principal emeritus of The Presbyterian College, Montreal.



Nearly a billion people in the world are hungry. What can you do?

FAST for CHANGE

Oct. 16 is World Food Day. Join Canadian Foodgrains Bank in marking this event by fasting, praying, giving and advocating to end global hunger.

To participate, or to order free resources for your church or small group, visit fastforchange.ca or call 1.800.665.0377.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank
A Christian Response to Hunger

Day Six

BY VICKI HOMES

God created man and woman
To commune with God
To experience a spiritual relationship.

God created all things.
The day, the night,
The seasons, the animals, the waters.
All the living creatures in the waters
and in the sky God created.

God created us.
We are family!
We are brothers and sisters in Christ.
Very humbling!
God gave us the earth and every creature
Gave us dominion over all of the earth
And the creatures that live in it.

We must take care of our families,
our community and in our world.

We must also nurture our
relationship with God.
For you and me and all of God's children.

Look up and say, "Hi God!"
God is beholding you and smiling!

*Read Vicki Homes's The month with
ministry 12.51-12.31 on page 160*



Faithfully Serving

Updates from the **Life & Mission Agency**

www.presbyterian.ca/lma

September 2011

1-800-619-7301 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7



Staffing Update

This month sees two new faces at the LMA and two familiar ones in new roles:

Rev. Ian McDonald is now Associate Secretary for Canadian Ministries/The Vine. Ian looks forward to building strong relationships with ministries across Canada.

Matthew Foxall joins the Stewardship Office as Mission Trip/Youth in Mission Coordinator.

Rev. Gordon Haynes, most recently Associate Secretary, Canadian Ministries/The Vine, now embarks on a research and analysis project that will guide the LMA in its future strategies and planning.

David Phillips takes on a new half-time role as Healing & Reconciliation Animator with Justice Ministries in addition to his ongoing work with Canadian Ministries / The Vine.



PWS&D Appeal

Presbyterian World Service & Development is working in partnership with

Canadian Foodgrains Bank in response to a massive food emergency in East Africa that has been classified as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

Your prayers and donations are needed to help provide desperately needed food relief that includes food-for-work projects and distributing wheat, beans, oil and famix, a supplementary food product.
presbyterian.ca/pwsd

EquippingFor...

The August edition of the PC-Pak contained the latest *Equipping For* series of articles in five categories: Elders, Evangelism & Outreach, Congregational Development, Christian Education, and Worship.

These articles are also available online at
equippingfor.ca

Mission Blogs

Each of our overseas mission staff now have a blog where you can follow along as they work to proclaim Christ as representatives of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

presbyterian.ca/missionstaff

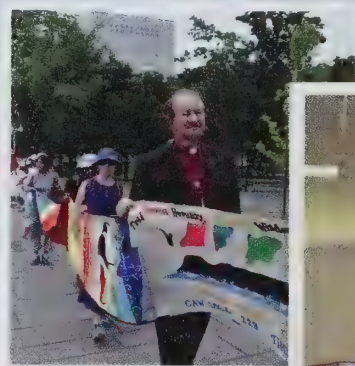
2012 Calendar

The 2012 wall calendar is now available for order from the Bookroom. The theme for 2012 is "**Go. Learn. Serve.**" highlighting just some of the many mission trips and experiences available to Presbyterians.

presbyterian.ca/calendar

Canada Youth 2012

The PCC's national youth conference takes place at Brock University from July 3-8, 2012. Registration will be underway soon. Stay tuned for news and updates on the website at canadayouth.ca





South Tower by Erik Slutsky, oil on canvas on wood

Ten Years After

PREACHING ON SEPTEMBER 11 CALLS FOR EQUAL MEASURES OF CARE AND RISK.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Sept. 11, 2011
13th Sunday
after Pentecost

Exodus 14:19-31
Matthew 18:21-35

Where were you on this date 10 years ago?

Sept. 11, 2001 is one of those “I was...” dates for many of us in Canada and around the world. A day when the impossible happened. The defenses of Fortress North America were defeated

from within. It wasn’t a nuclear attack or chemical warfare. Missiles didn’t rain down from the stratosphere. It was as simple as object A striking object B with enough force to destroy both. ►

Jesus didn't submit to attack and accept death to protect one nation from another. Or to show whose side God was on

To kill many. To consign many more to life-without and slow death.

Did we still think deep down inside that God was on our side? The 9-11 terrorists were convinced God was on their side. A graffiti artist in Manhattan wrote, soon after that day, "Dear God, save us from the people who believe in you."

As people of faith, we're conditioned to believe there are everlasting arms beneath us. When disaster strikes we can't help feeling God has let us slip. We soon talk ourselves out of such ideas. But we never lose the sense that our relationship with God has changed. We thought we were safe from the terrors so many others in our world live through. We also thought the powers the Pentagon and World Trade Centre stood for would stand forever and for good. Did we

confuse those powers for God's power?

Our first reading today tells a tale of God destroying one nation, or at least its power, for the good of another nation. God strikes terror on the Egyptian army before drowning them. We learned this story in Sunday school, and we were told it was good news. As adults it makes us uncomfortable enough to want to push it to the margins of our canon.

The men who hijacked the airplanes this day 10 years ago believed they were striking one nation for the good of another, and that God called them to do it. Handle the old story with great care today, or you'll be standing with those who still rejoice over the destruction and carnage of 10 years ago. You'll find yourself among those on our side who authorized a war of vengeance 10 years ago. And those who danced when bin Laden's death and the barbaric, blasphemous treatment of his body were announced.

You won't be far from Israel on the safe side of the sea, rejoicing over the deaths of so many. Or the servant who conveniently forgot his dependence on grace and showed no grace to another.

Resist the temptation to wriggle out from under the gospel, saying the command to forgive without limit only applies to internal relations in the church. Jesus didn't submit to attack and accept death to protect one nation from another. Or to show whose side God was on.

Our ancestors in faith formed their understanding of themselves and their purpose through a narrative of divine violence. Our formative narrative hinges on the death of an innocent One. The only One, we say, who was ever wholly innocent. Maybe it's true that there's no liberation from captivity in this world without someone suffering. Without some act of human violence, whether it's against Pharaoh's army or a sacrificial victim.

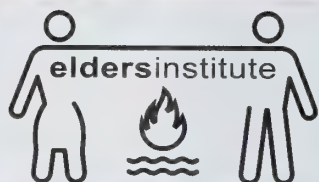
This does not tell us God is violent by nature. It does not authorize our violence or our vengeful reaction to the violent dreams and terrible actions of others.

Doesn't Jesus' death release us all from the downward, deathward spiral of violence? Doesn't his resurrection show us that it is God's way to give life and to make things new?

The heroic saga of the Exodus includes Moses' lover's quarrel with Israel, who soon forgot the cost of salvation and the source of providence. Our heroic saga through the last 10 years has unfolded in blunt-edged vengeance, rough justice, and grim determination to rebuild fallen idols and restore lost confidence. Maybe we've confused the powers for God's power after all. ■

Rev. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.

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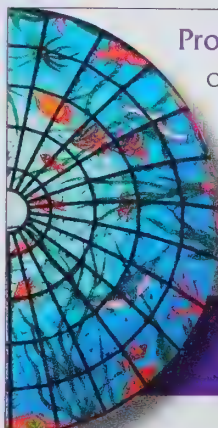
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Galileo Magnifico

ONE BOOK ABOUT SIX TRIPS MAKES FOR A GREAT JOURNEY. BY NATHAN BUSH

Galileo in Rome: The Rise and Fall of a Troublesome Genius

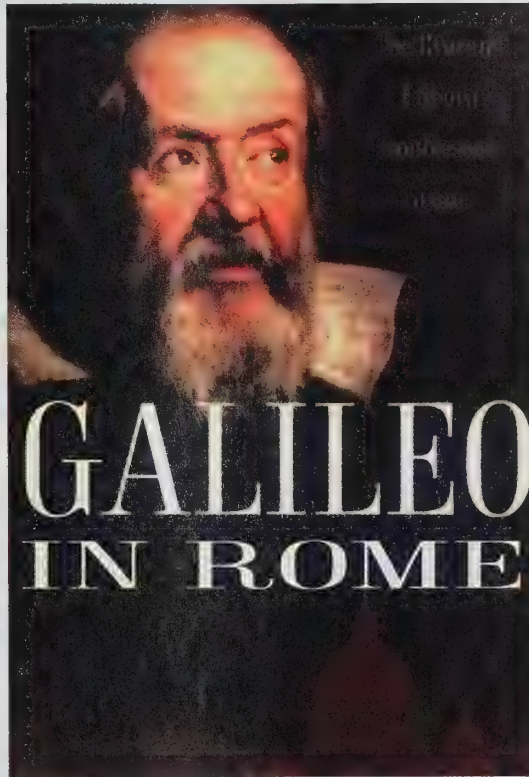
William R. Shea and Mariano
Artigas, Oxford University Press

Well known

even in his time as a physicist, mathematician and astronomer, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), sometimes called the father of modern science, confirmed theories such as a heliocentric universe and that objects accelerate at the same rate in a vacuum, a building block of Newtonian physics.

Galileo also worked on determining the speed of light, though his experiments were inconclusive.

Galileo in Rome: The Rise and Fall of a Troublesome Genius focuses on Galileo's six trips to Rome. His first trip in 1587 was looking for work, which he did not find. His second trip, nearly 25 years later, was as a famous professor of mathematics at the University of Pisa (1589-1592) and the University of Padua (1592-1610). By this point, Galileo had determined how to improve telescope design so the images would be right side up instead of upside down. From then on he started making



progress in astronomy.

Discoveries via the telescope pointed toward the Copernican theory, that the sun was the centre of the universe. Nicolaus Copernicus had published his theory in 1543, but it wasn't widely accepted because many people in positions of political and religious power believed the Earth was the centre of the universe. Many in Rome took offense at this theory, but some were convinced by Galileo's discoveries in support of Copernicus. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (a Jesuit and distinguished professor at the Roman College) gave Galileo

permission to use the Copernican world system so long as he only used it hypothetically to help with astronomy and did not teach the theory.

Despite this warning, Galileo decided to write *The Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems*. The book purported to be a four-day dialogue between three men: one a full-

blown Copernican, the next leaning toward the Copernican side but not completely sure, and the third, Simplicio, sounding rather dimwitted believing the Earth was the centre of the universe. Galileo sent the book to an acquaintance to read before sending it to the publisher. When the book was published, the authorities read it and were outraged.

Galileo's sixth trip to Rome was for a trial. After a lengthy process, he was sentenced to house arrest for the rest of his life. ■

Nathan Bush is a ninth grade student in Winnipeg.

Westminster Confession Considered

NORMAN BETHUNE AND THE 'STERN AND UNCOMPROMISING DOCUMENT'

BY DANIEL D. SCOTT

According to Adrienne Clarkson, the *Westminster Confession* is "a stern and uncompromising document." That sounds a bit harsh. Is she correct? Is that how others see one of the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and if so, what should we be doing about it?

The former Governor General makes this claim about the Confession's rigidity in her recent biography of Norman Bethune in the *Extraordinary Canadians* series edited by her husband, John Ralston Saul. Bethune is the celebrated Canadian eulogized by Mao Zedong for his selflessness and courage. As every Chinese student has been taught for decades, Bethune was the Canadian doctor who joined in the liberation of China and died from an infection caught from a dirty scalpel that nicked him while performing surgery. In Canada he is not as well known.

Clarkson discusses in great detail Bethune's upbringing. She writes, "In our secular age, the fact that someone was the son of a Presbyterian minister may seem to be a mere detail—such as hair colour, or height, or an aptitude for a particular sport. But, in fact, religion was an overwhelming consideration in the Canada in which Norman Bethune was born." The Presbyterian upbringing is not always presented in a favourable light in Clarkson's biography, particularly the influence of the *Westminster Confession*, which "makes clear the two important tenets for which the church

was known—predestination and the reality of hell."

Clarkson muses, "One can only imagine the effect that this ... would have had on a young child." Presumably, as she expands and suggests on a number of occasions throughout the book, the effect was clearly negative.

Maybe we were known for an emphasis, or an overemphasis, on determinism and hell. However, were there not other, more positive aspects that influenced Bethune from his Presbyterian roots?

Admittedly, the biography, which incidentally is very fine, tells of the missionary zeal for China that was strong in the days of Bethune's youth. He would have heard the calls for the "evangelization of the world in this generation," and China was the goal. Clarkson says, "Some say that by doing what he did, ironically Bethune became Canada's greatest missionary, because his help to the Chinese in two critical years was an example of selflessness and determination to put others first." Bethune did not go to China as a missionary agent of the Presbyterian Church. In fact, Clarkson makes clear that he had a fractured relationship with his father and his father's church. Bethune struggled with matters of faith and resisted any notion that he was part of the "elect."

And yet, could it be argued that Bethune's Westminster-Confession-enriched Presbyterian upbringing prepared him for a life of selfless

service, whether with the urban poor in Montreal, in Spain or in China? Even if one does not agree with his communist leanings, he certainly was generous to those less fortunate. The 122nd question of the Shorter Catechism speaks of duty to others: "... to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to do to others: What we would have them to do to us." Certainly, Bethune did that.

And besides, were there not other aspects of the *Confession* that influenced Bethune? Can we assume that only the parts that talk about hell and predestination caught his attention? Undoubtedly he would have memorized the first question and answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Along with every other child in Sabbath school he would have had "what is the chief end of man?" drilled in to him and would have immediately known the response, "to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

If Clarkson had wanted, she could have found ample means to demonstrate how this may have influenced Bethune. For example, there is his love of art. Bethune was quite an artist; he even established the Montreal Children's Creative Art Centre in his own apartment at Beaver Hall square, "where he offered classes three afternoons a week and on Saturday mornings." As a surgeon, he considered himself more of an artist than a technician, pioneering new techniques and patenting innovative surgical equipment. In his own way, could we assume Bethune was attempting to bring glory

to God? Was he enjoying God in his attempts to be creative like his Creator? Surely, "Enjoying God" would have been one of the first things Bethune memorized in Sabbath school, long before getting to the bits about fearing God and the doctrine of hell.

To be sure, Clarkson does not portray Bethune as a saint or even as a paragon of Presbyterian piety. In fact, her Bethune is quite the opposite. He staunchly rejected his childhood religious affiliation, though it no doubt influenced the man he would become. Perhaps he, like Clarkson, saw the church of his parents and the *Westminster Confession* as "stern and uncompromising." I suspect that many others, in a similar manner, have turned their back on the church and its historical subordinate standard in our day. If so, what should we be doing about it?

Let me suggest two things. First,

we need to positively state the teachings of the *Confession* in ways that are relevant and understandable for our day. When we focus on the positive statement such as "Worship the Lord your God," (Chapter 21) and not on the negative statement of "Thou shalt not bow down to any graven image," we create a mindset of "Yes, I can do this," rather than "No, I cannot." Something this simple can go a long way in helping others want to do what God commands.

Second, let's assume for a moment that the *Confession* is stern and uncompromising. It does, after all, contain some very strong statements that those outside the church, and even many within the church today, might find difficult to understand or accept. If that is the case, we must be careful to ensure that we as Presbyterians are not "stern and uncompromising," except on key principles. Nothing turns

people off faster.

Speaking of the doctrine of predestination, the *Confession* states that since it is a "high mystery" it is "to be handled with special prudence and care." Perhaps the church of Bethune's youth missed this caveat. They may have missed, also, Chapter 11 dealing with "Free Will" and Chapter 20 giving instruction on "Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience." Tact may be as important as 'correct' theology in terms of growing the church today.

We can't do much about the Presbyterians in Bethune's day. Likely, Clarkson's characterization of them is correct. One wonders what her assessment of the PCC today might be. ■

Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott is the minister of St. John's, Bradford, Ont., and the former vice president and academic dean at Tyndale University College, Toronto.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission

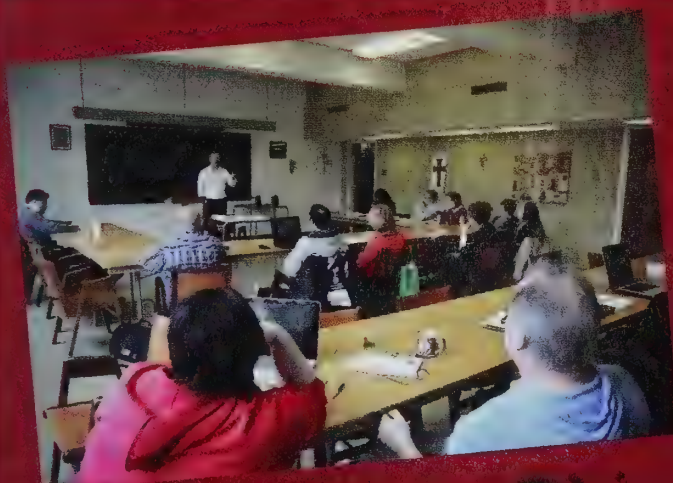


Photo credit: Dallas Curow

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The cross on the wall and the computers on the desktops in this classroom at The Presbyterian College in Montreal communicate the ongoing challenge of theological education: how do we prepare ministers of the church who are able to share the ancient gospel story in ways that resonate with people in the rapidly changing world of today? Planned gifts continue to play an important role in this educational process. Each theological student who attends one of our three theological colleges is the beneficiary of donors whose generosity through a bequest or other planned gift provides them with scholarships, bursaries and up-to-date facilities and resources.

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Healthy and Happy

CLERGY CENTRE HELPS MINISTERS HELP THEMSELVES. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Rev. Robert Smith

came to the ministry as a second career—sort of. He was a minister in the United States during the 1980s, and then briefly in the 1990s when he came to Canada. Soon after he put his collar aside, went back to school, and got a job elsewhere. After several years of life in the secular world, his call was reawakened when, while working in downtown Victoria, he “realized the pains and needs of the inner-city.”

“I felt the only way I could address

that was to go back into the church and encourage the church to work for people living on the edges,” Smith said. “I felt my call back into ministry while working for 7-Eleven.”

Smith was ordained in 2007 as a minister in the United Church, where he was “settled”—or placed—in his first charge. The process is meant to match a church’s needs with a new minister’s skills and gifts. Unfortunately, Smith’s settlement charge wasn’t a good fit, and it wasn’t long before he started to feel down.

“The biggest challenge is the loneliness. My first parish was on the coast of B.C., about six hours from the nearest centre. So there’s the physical loneliness, but there’s also the loneliness of what we do. Our job is a very different job. We can’t always talk with someone of the struggles we have. You can’t always go to a friend. For the first four years of ministry, we’re asking, who am I as a minister and what does that term mean?”

Smith eventually took a course through the Centre for Clergy Care

and Congregational Health in 2008, and left his settlement charge the same year. He soon ended up at Knox United, Prince George, B.C., where he is today.

"I was still grappling with, what is my job and how do I do that job well? The other ministers where I am now have been here for a while, so they're not asking those identity questions. So I still felt fairly lonely even though I was in the city. So at Starting Well, I had the chance to explore those identity questions. Who am I and what am I becoming? I had been running

as ministers. For many clergy, there's little being done to take care of that."

Established in 2006, and sponsored by Emmanuel College and Knox College, the Centre was created following the release of a study of Irvine's entitled, *Clergy Well-Being: Seeking Wholeness with Integrity*. The results were disturbing. As referenced in the *Record's* April 2006 issue, "77 per cent of the surveyed clergy felt they were more like a CEO than a pastor; 18 percent could not identify a close friend in church or their community; and 80 percent felt guilty if caught

helpful for us to realize our questions are not unique and we're not alone in our struggles. The power of it is connecting with others."

The Centre's Take Care program focuses on the middle years of ministry, when rejuvenation, revision and reflection are often necessary. It deals with topics such as mid-life challenges, family care, self care, and call transitions.

Rev. Heather Anderson, a Lutheran minister currently working as chaplain at the Luther Special Care Home in Saskatoon, is at this stage. A minister for

'Each stage of life and ministry presents a different set and series of issues to deal with. Who we are as individuals is primary to who we are as ministers'

a multi-million dollar 7-Eleven. My identity was still in the business management phase. So letting go of who I was and embracing who I am as a minister was important."

The Starting Well program, offered through the Centre, is the first in a series of programs and events tailored to different stages of ministry. It is meant for those who have been ordained or commissioned within the past three years. Participants meet four or five days each year, for three years, and look at their roles as leaders, finding balance in ministry, and exploring the context of ministry. And though the Centre is based at Knox College, Toronto, workshops and seminars are offered across the country.

"I get excited about Starting Well, because the first five years of ministry will often characterize the rest of your ministry," said Rev. Dr. Andrew Irvine, a Presbyterian, director of the Centre, and also director of the Doctor of Ministry program at the Toronto School of Theology.

"Each stage of life and ministry presents a different set and series of issues to deal with. Who we are as individuals is primary to who we are

taking time off during the week even though most work a 50-hour week."

At the same time as the report's release, colleges of the Toronto School of Theology were being asked for follow-up support by their alumni.

"Clergy are functioning in a model of ministry from the last century, and don't know where they fit in modern society," said Irvine, who has been a minister for 25 years, and whose father was a minister for 55 years. "For a minister 50 years ago, their role was precise. Today, in postmodern society, we're asking, does the church fit at all? And there are questions around that."

For Smith, discovering that many ministers have the same thoughts and feelings that he had was a huge encouragement.

"It was very helpful in meeting with other people, to realize that I wasn't alone in my own struggles," said Smith. "Now I've gone through the whole [Starting Well] program, all three years, and I continue to be amazed, no matter what denomination we serve, or if we're in the inner-city, or a rural congregation, that a lot of those same questions are there for us. So it really is quite

15 years, and in her mid-40s, Anderson came to the Clergy Care Centre in 2010 to learn about balancing priorities—something she said ministers don't do very well.

"Your personal life has to be first and ministry second," she said, noting it was one of the lines Irvine delivered that has stuck with her. "Pastors tend to switch that around sometimes. These are things I struggle with, and most pastors I know do, too. We define ourselves by our occupation very often, and pastors are no different than anyone else. If we are going to truly care for people, we have to care for ourselves."

There's often a disconnect between clergy and their own spiritual roots, Irvine said, due to "rampant busy-ness and the needs of the church."

Unfortunately, for many congregations, the needs of the minister often fall below the radar.

"I think congregations and institutions are getting better at it, but they have a ways to go yet," said Anderson, noting that small congregations are often struggling with so many other issues that the health of the minister gets overlooked. "I think people ➤

'People are getting tired and not seeing the light at the end of the tunnel,' said Irvine. 'Is this all there is? How do I revitalize my ministry?'

need to be educated on what clergy really do; we're not just there on Sunday."

Irvine said the mid-career program is a popular one, noting that the sessions "provide a safe space" to explore common issues.

"People are getting tired and not seeing the light at the end of the tunnel," he said. "Is this all there is? How do I revitalize my ministry?"

The Centre's ecumenical make-up is a particular strength of the program, as problems and challenges are common throughout the Church, regardless of where membership lies. Taking part in workshops with people from other

denominations also helps ministers open up about how they really feel.

"People are looking for a safe space to dialogue," said Irvine. "A minister is not going to speak to their session about it. They're not going to raise it in presbytery. They're not going to go with someone to their bishop. They're not going to go to colleagues because it will get back to others. And they're often not going to go to their partner. But they come to the five-day event, and within 24 hours, they feel free to open up and talk."

The final stage is Ending Well: Making the Most of Retirement—a three-day event that addresses the emotional, psychological and spiritual work needed to transition into retirement from active ministry.

"Were looking at identity issues," said Irvine. "So off comes the collar, who are you? How do you fit back into a community of faith? Not as Rev. Smith, but as Joe."

Rev. Nan St. Louis was ordained in 1974. She's currently looking at retirement and found the course very helpful. As minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Mount Forest, and Knox, Conn, Ont., she realizes she likely won't want to carry the load of a congregation after retirement, but wants to explore some other ways she can remain useful to a church community. Her husband attended with her.

"We were able to talk together about it. We hadn't done that, and it gave us a structure of things to help us about instead of going around in circles."

As a minister for more than three decades, St. Louis has seen a lot. During her ministry career, however, there have been a few things she has seen as her greatest challenges.

"Burn-out is a huge thing," she said. "I've been on the edge of burnout

a few times, but I pulled back and regrouped and took the time I needed to not go over the edge.

"Being able to re-focus is important. When you start your ministry, you have certain hopes and dreams. Then you get into the middle of it, and the expectations of what you can accomplish change as reality sets in. Now I'm thinking about how I have two or three years left, and what do I need to accomplish? What can I do afterwards to support people in the church? So there is always a re-focusing that needs to go on."

Though St. Louis found the Centre to be helpful, she has some ideas of some other ways it can aid the church's ministers.

"I'm from the age in which the training that I received was to be the shepherd of the sheep. But there's a real shift in the way the church needs to function; there is a need for ministers to give leadership, but it's also about empowering the laity. They're not sheep. It's a whole different psychology.

"[When I was there,] these words were not mentioned at Knox College—discipleship, evangelism. So I think the Centre may be helpful in picking up where the church needs to be. It would be nice to pull together some people who can speak about the trends and the challenges. People from out in the field who can give us some pointers."

"The health of the clergy is vital to the health of the congregation," said Irvine, noting that secure, happy ministers feel free to release others to share in ministry. "The connections are vital, and we have the opportunity to make it work." ■

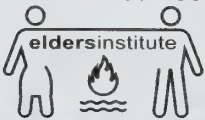
Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.

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PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2011 Edition, Issue 3

ABRIDGED
VERSION



Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children

THE IDEA IS HEARTBREAKING: SMALL CHILDREN LEFT without their parents due to AIDS, or emerging into a world already burdened by poverty and hardship. Yet it is a reality for far too many children in developing countries around the world.

Our church is actively working to support orphans and vulnerable children through Presbyterian World Service & Development. Together, with dedicated program partners around the world, we are helping bring new hope and opportunity to some of the most marginalized and neglected kids in the world.

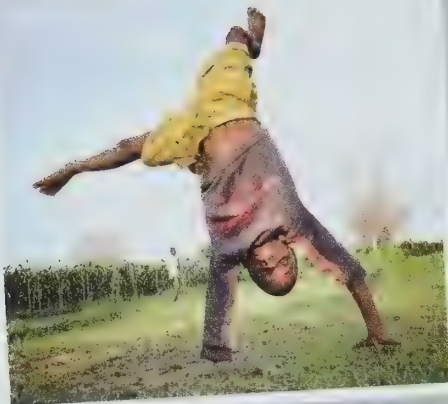
The concept of vulnerable children generally refers to orphans and other groups of children more exposed to risks than their peers, such as children who suffer from extreme poverty or face disabilities. They are the children most likely to fall through the cracks. Special attention and focused programs are absolutely essential in order to ensure these children receive the support they need to not only survive, but thrive.

PWS&D's work to support orphans and vulnerable children includes:

- paying school fees and providing necessary supplies and uniforms
- offering skills training in activities such as electrical, welding, tailoring, hairdressing, computers, carpentry and motor vehicle repair

- providing scholarships for post-secondary education
- increasing access to daily nutritious meals and supplying food supplements
- purchasing seed and fertilizer to support disadvantaged families
- building homes for improved shelter
- offering individualized attention, encouragement and follow-up from trained volunteers and staff
- teaching how to prevent the spread of HIV from mother to child
- increasing awareness of high-risk activities
- offering free medical services to improve overall health and wellbeing
- conducting nutrition education
- training teachers, guardians and volunteers in order to deliver high-quality care and education
- psychosocial support to help overcome trauma and emotional challenges, and learn positive coping methods.

The results are seen in the faces of those we support. The health of children is significantly improving, giving them new strength and the mental and emotional stamina to not only attend school but excel in their studies. Caregiving families are accessing important resources and the overall capacity of entire communities is increasing as teachers and volunteers receive training and education. ➤



Services offered involve women and men, allowing both genders to participate in skills training and making decisions. Beneficiaries of the programs frequently share their stories with other children, becoming mentors and role models, and offering valuable learning opportunities for others.

Helping Orphans Overcome

According to the UNAIDS 2010 Global Report, more than 33 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2010. The story is particularly bleak for regions like sub-Saharan Africa, where the majority of new HIV infections continue to occur. Although the rate of new infections has been gradually falling, levels of new infections are still high and the number of people living with HIV has increased worldwide.

There is good news. The Global Report points to a 19% decrease in the number of new infections and of the 15 million people living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries, at least 5.2 million have access to treatment. It is clear that HIV prevention is effective. Treatment is working. More families are receiving medication

Social support for orphans must continue, and recent success in rolling out programs of support such as cash transfers, food support and education bursaries must be expanded and sustained.

— UNAIDS 2010 GLOBAL REPORT

and support. Communities are beginning to conquer stigma and discrimination. These are modest—yet fragile—steps in the right direction.

However, while the world celebrates the beginning of a decrease in the number of overall deaths, the number of AIDS orphans is still rising. The estimated number of children 17 years of age or younger who lost their parents due to HIV rose from approximately 14.6 million in 2005 to 16.6 million in 2009. And almost 90% live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Presbyterian World Service & Development is working in Africa and around

the world to bring real hope and opportunity to orphans through initiatives that not only address immediate needs, but also ensure long-term achievements. Care and support for orphaned children comes from families and communities, so as the number of orphaned children grows, the caregiving families and communities also require assistance.

The results are that orphans and vulnerable children are improving their strength, health and outlook on life, while also being empowered to take on new, exciting challenges and prospects.



A GIFT OF HOPE



Presbyterian World Service & Development

The development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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LOOKING IN SHOUTING OUT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATY LEMAY



Last Spring, more than 550 Presbyterian women from across the country and around the world gathered near Toronto to "Look in, Shout Out." For four days they talked, they listened, and they learned, and were both inspired and challenged to use that which bound them to each other—as women, and as Christians—to stand up and speak out for change in their churches and their communities.

LOOKING IN, SHOUTING OUT

WOMEN'S GATHERING INSPIRES WOMEN TO 'BE TRANSFORMED.' BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Women from every province and from 12 PCC-partner countries journeyed to Richmond Hill, Ont., in May for the National Presbyterian Women's Gathering. Hosted by the Atlantic Mission Society and the Women's Missionary Society (and thanks to grants from various church funds), the inaugural event was, by all accounts, a great success.

"The conference reminded me again of how important it is for women to meet together," said Rev. Karen Horst, who emceed the event. "Women have fought and continue to fight for equal opportunities and a way to lead in the world that is authentic. Because of the quality of this conference both in content and design, capable

women were given a forum to dialogue and encourage one another."

Women chose from nearly 30 workshops with topics as diverse as Caring for Creation, Nurturing a Christian Family, Muslim Women—Myths and Facts, Yoga as Christian Practice, Bullying in Canada, and Women in Poverty.

For Horst, who admits "the entire conference was a highlight," did have a couple stand-out moments: one was "having the privilege of announcing that we had raised over \$14,000 in one weekend for Afghanistan."

The offering—which was danced to the front during a worship service led by visitors from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Nigeria—will support a girls' education project in Afghanistan, through Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Inspiring stories were commonplace at the event. Stevie Cameron is a member of St. Andrew's, King Street, Toronto. About 20 years ago, she and a group from the congregation created the

Out of the Cold program, which provides a warm meal and quiet respite for people living on the streets. Cameron is also a journalist and award-winning author, and she shared insights gained from her latest book, *On the Farm: Robert William Pickton and the Tragic Story of Vancouver's Missing Women*.

It was, in fact, her transforming experience with Out of the Cold that led her to write the book—a nine-year journey that resulted in new friendships with residents of Vancouver's downtown east side. "Out of the Cold taught me about hunger. It taught me about abuse, pov-

erty, illness, addiction, loneliness, and the longing in every human heart for love, family, home, health, work and something better than the streets. So that's why I said yes ... And it was one of the best decisions I ever made."

Rev. Margaret Mullin, executive director of Winnipeg Inner City Missions, spoke about her work and how a group of WMS women in the 1960s were responsible for creating Flora House, now a part of WICM. "[Those] women had a vision for children in the north end of Winnipeg ... When they saw the kids, when they saw the need, when they looked through the eyes of Jesus and felt Jesus' compassion in their hearts, they could not, not do something about it."

Dr. Margaret Somerville, author, professor and founding director of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University, Montreal, spoke about religion in the public square.

"It occurred to me that the title of your conference, 'Look In, Shout Out,' states in a nutshell what I believe is the proper role of religion in the public square: Religion requires us both to 'look in' and to 'shout out.' Either without the other is, at the least, inadequate or even dangerous."

Rev. Sarah Kim, executive director of the WMS, said it is likely another event will be held in three years' time.

"The whole event was such an elated experience ... when the program actually started on Friday afternoon, I felt shivers go through my body and there was a moment of joy and excitement that it had finally arrived."

Find photos and Dr. Somerville's addresses at womensgathering.ca. ■

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.



'SOME WOMEN'

COMING TOGETHER TO DISCERN GOD'S WAY. BY PAULETTE BROWN

We come in the presence of God—we lay everything on the altar of God: our cherished positions about how things ought to be, ourselves as fallible, prone to mistakes—with one thing in common, a quest for transformation, so that we may be able to be God's channel of love, grace, peace, and transformation wherever we are.

In the Old Testament text we meet our biblical foremothers in Numbers 27:1-8—Malah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah.

We see these women are enmeshed in a situation that needs change. It is an old, ongoing situation concerning the community's understanding of inheritance; understandings that have been legislated and were binding.

The legacy of these women is a relentless attitude, a daring spirit to enter the most unlikely places, to confront the most sacred legislation that bound the community, to find their voices and use their voices for change.

They begin with something that is a common value, a value they know Moses upholds: 'Our dad was a loyal, faithful member of the community. He was apportioned lands, something that will cause his name to be remembered, because of his loyalty to this group. Moses, why should this honorable man's name disappear because he has no sons? Give us some of his land and in this way his name will not disappear.'

We might say that's a round-about way to achieve justice. But for those of us who, more often than not, are swimming upstream—those of us whose experiences involve learning the art and strategy of surviving and thriving against all odds, not

only against gender discrimination, but caste, class, race, economic standing, colour, disabilities, sexualities—we know the value of stepping back, seeking solidarity, putting heads together to strategize.

The word of God for you this day is: how do you step back, look again at yourselves, examine your contexts, pay attention to the assumptions and values that operate in your contexts, and see the extent to which these are consistent with discerning God's way forward for you?

You must be careful about what you ask of God in prayer. Why? Because you might just get it. You ask for transformation, you might get it. You don't take the name of the Lord in vain. You don't go around saying that you are seeking God's input, guidance or God's intervention in something and not be serious about it.

This is so timely for our church. So timely for women to come together, to seek God's guidance in steering our church toward a new and transforming vision of what it means to be in service.

We are different, but all of us, at some point, have been "some women" as in Luke 8:1-3. We have been nameless and faceless. We have been left off the lists. We have been second-guessed.

And it is this some-ness that is our strength; the point on which we might work together, in spite of our differences, our conflicting stories, and our different experiences of mission and life.

It is this some-ness that can provide a way for us to look in and be transformed. ■

Rev. Paulette Brown is executive director of Flemingdon Gateway Mission, Toronto. This is an excerpt of her sermon given at the event.



A FANTABULOUS EVENT

A VISITOR FROM INDIA FINDS INSPIRATION AND STRENGTH. BY KARUNA ROY

There is a new word floating around in my country, India. It's a combination of two words—fantastic and fabulous. The word then becomes, fantabulous! What a fantabulous program the Look In, Shout Out event was. The best part was that it generated authority, vigour and enthusiasm, and all were visible at the Presbyterian Women's Gathering held at the Sheraton Hotel.

I hold myself fortunate, who by God's grace could come to this event. I was invited by the Women's Missionary Society and I feel treasured to have been considered worthy of this invitation. This was my third visit to Canada among the gracious Presbyterians and indeed meeting people again and pondering over lost memories was very exciting. I consider the Presbyterian Church in Canada to be

my second home and there's always an extra bit of energy, excitement and pleasure to be there in person.

The Look In, Shout Out program meant a lot to me. I felt I was there not only in body, but in soul. The spiritual worship was very moving. One of the speakers spoke on the importance of prayer and she said, "Be careful what you pray for because prayers are answered." Indeed, we need to pray with a lot of thinking and feeling because prayer changes things. The fellowship was exquisite. I made new friends, met with the older ones, had a tremendous exposure to different cultures, but I left feeling that I am under the same roof built by Jesus for everyone, and that's what I call fellowship. I had an opportunity to be silent for a while and to ponder over my existence, my identity, my role in life, and my commitment

to Jesus. I looked inside myself and found that I do lack in my responsibilities. We never seem to find time to be ourselves or to reflect on what we are inside but this gathering made me peer deep inside me. I have learned to stop and hear the call. I know I have to shout out, to reveal, to explain, to share all that I learned at this gathering, and believe me, I have already started. Transformation for me applies to body and soul. It has to be complete and I shall strive for it.

I attended four workshops; all were tremendous eye openers. "How Can We Make a Difference?" told me what can be done in the face of enormous need. Every drop in the ocean counts. Each step taken eventually leads to the destination. "Caring for the Caregivers" focused on compassion, care, love and concern. It spoke of the "healing presence" where the life of a caregiver is healed, embraced and empowered. They do so much for others; we need to find ways to provide support. For more than a decade, I worked with people with HIV/AIDS, but I still needed a supportive hand on my shoulder to help me determine whether I was in the right place. The third workshop was "Looking in ... Together." I know that our day-to-day lives have to be like an open book before God but what matters is how God reads it and provides answers. Through spiritual direction we experience God's presence in everyday life. The last workshop was on "The Worst Kind of Traffic Jam." It made us stand with the helpless victims of human trafficking, especially young women and children who face sexual exploitation. A continuous voice has to be raised for stricter laws to fight this inhumane practice. I will continue to shout out.

All these workshops were of great help to me as I am directly involved in



this work. I worked for 14 years with the Church of North India as the coordinator for HIV/AIDS programs and later the community health program. I now live in a small city named Haldwani in Uttarakhand State of India, in the foothills of the Himalayas where women shoulder almost everything but are considered the backbenchers. Women are a weaker sex in the true sense because laziness and alcoholism are rampant. Amidst this environment, I have started a registered NGO known as K's Konsultancy: *Daaitva* (responsi-

bility towards humanity), Educational and Social Welfare Society where I run programs for children, youth, women, elders and HIV-positive people. My children's program, "Give Me Some Space," is a parent-teacher-student counseling program. For youth, I run "Do I Know Myself?" which teaches various skills, and how to market themselves in today's corporate world. For women we have, "I Am No Less," an empowerment program with initiatives to form self-help groups. For the elderly there is "Aging Gracefully" where we talk about

coping with ageing, health, retirement, acceptance, and change. The HIV/AIDS awareness and counseling program is called "Live Life to its Fullest."

All I need is prayer and support, and this conference has made me stronger to handle challenging situations and has taught me to keep going, as God is there to guide me. Thank you, all. ■

Karuna Roy received the 2006 E.H. Johnson award from the Presbyterian Church in Canada for her work on HIV/AIDS programming.

BEING TRANSFORMED

A CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKER INSPIRES CONVICTION AND COURAGE. BY ANITA MACK

When the Atlantic Mission Society and the Women's Missionary Society decided to jointly organize a large scale National Presbyterian Women's Gathering, there were some misgivings. Would people come? Would Presbyterian women embrace a keynote speaker with a reputation for controversy? Worry disappeared when registrations started pouring in, over 550 of them—mostly of older women but also a surprising number of younger ones. Ages ranged from 18 to 92. There were numerous mother-daughter teams and even a few instances of three generation representation.

The conference was barely underway when ethicist Margaret Somerville's initial keynote address "Should Religion Have a Voice in the Public Square?" challenged us to think critically about the place of religious voices in society. Should people of faith continue to accept being silenced and consigned to the private realm in our secular society? Or should we refuse the "pink slip" and have confidence in the validity of our convictions? Dr.

Somerville urged us to believe in the relevance and importance of religious perspectives. Her second address, "Brave New Babies," was even more thought-provoking and counter-cultural.

Dr. Somerville warned of the dangers of absolute reproductive freedom. It is her conviction that the rights of the most vulnerable (the babies) should be paramount. Children should have the right to know their biological origins and, if possible, grow up in the presence of their parents. Judging from the loud applause, her message clearly resonated with the participants. For many of us, both her



messages were liberating and transformational. She gave us permission to believe in the validity of traditional, religious perspectives and their vital importance and contribution to public discussion. The conference theme “Be Transformed”—based on Romans 12:2 (“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect”)—had come alive.

What was it, in the end, that made the Women’s Gathering such a spectacular success? Was it the superb organization, incredible attention to detail, the diversity of participants and international guests, the choice of stimulating speakers, the inspiring worship services, the excellent workshops, the very comfortable surroundings and great meals? Was it the opportunity to connect with old friends and make new ones? (I, for one, was thrilled to reconnect with an international guest whom I knew 30 years ago in Nigeria.)

Probably all of the above. When you get 550 Presbyterian women together who love God and God’s church, it is bound to be a remarkable event. Though not an AMS/WMS event per se, the qualities these organizations are known for (kindness, openness to learning, humility, spiritual maturity, generosity, joy and love) were palpable and pervasive. In such an environment, how could Look In, Shout Out not have been a most memorable and transformational event? ■

Anita Mack is a regional staff person for the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario. She is a member at St. Andrew’s, St. Lambert, Que.

MY SHOUT-OUT

CONTINUING THE WORK OF WOMEN PAST.

BY BETHANY MCCAFFREY

I realized I was in the middle of something really special when I found myself sitting at a table drinking bubble tea at a restaurant with three fabulous women from Toronto, Vancouver, and Lethbridge, Alta., at midnight, discussing ministry, mission, and life as women in the church. We had met up at the young women’s gathering following the opening banquet and, as none of us were particularly tired, we decided to head out for a midnight snack.

I was invited to attend the National Presbyterian Women’s Gathering as a student representative. When I first

received the registration package, I was overwhelmed by the sheer size of the event. There were over 25 workshop options as well as four guest speakers. Having been to, and volunteered at, Canada Youth, my expectations were heavily influenced by my experiences there; I was looking forward to getting to meet different women from across the country, to worship and have fellowship together.

It was really special to me as a young woman in the Presbyterian Church to get to meet the women who have worked tirelessly for so many years to further the work of the church in so many different ways. I was also encouraged by the fact that I was not the only young woman present at the conference. It was a great opportunity to meet others and to talk about how we as young women in the church will continue the work of all the women before us with the same enthusiasm, creativity, resourcefulness and grace.

To say that the conference exceeded my expectations would be an understatement. While I expected a similar experience to Canada Youth, I wasn’t prepared for the energy that was present in the ballroom when I first walked in. What was even more surprising was that the energy was present not only the first night, but throughout the whole conference and, if it’s possible, may have increased. Each of the workshop leaders and guest speakers was so in touch with the theme of Look In, Shout

Out that no matter who I seemed to talk to, whether they’d been to the same presentation as me or not, we were able to talk and share ►



and come away with even more ideas to take back to our congregations.

It is difficult to choose just one speaker as my favourite; each had so much to offer us and each challenged us to “look in” to our own understandings and preconceptions and encouraged us to go back and “shout out” not only to our congregations and friends, but to the larger community and world.

I was especially inspired by Dr. Margaret Somerville’s first address in which she presented an argument for the need for a religious voice in secular society.

I left the conference with a deeper understanding of what it means to look in and shout out. When I looked around the ballroom at the nearly 600 women who had gathered, I was reminded of the awesome collection

of gifts that we have in our church and reminded of the history of the work of women. I leave the conference encouraged to use my voice both in the church and in the community at large, and to speak up for what I believe in. ■

Bethany McCaffrey is the children’s ministry coordinator at Armour Heights, Toronto.

A LONG JOURNEY

AFTER MANY YEARS OF LOOKING IN, ONE WOMAN FINALLY SHOUTS OUT.

BY MARGARET MULLIN / THUNDERING EAGLE WOMAN

Five women from Winnipeg Inner City Missions attended the Presbyterian Women’s Gathering. For me, Rev. Margaret Mullin/Thundering Eagle Woman, it was an honour to be asked to be one of the plenary speakers at the first, and I certainly hope not last, National Presbyterian Women’s Gathering. It was wonderful to bring three Canadian indigenous women and our parish social worker to the gathering with me. That was made possible by the generosity of the Women’s Missionary Society, the Conference Travel Fund, and the Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario.

After 15 years of looking in, and recovering my own lost Anishinabe cultural and spiritual heritage, a moment in time arrived for me to shout out what I have learned with the church. I am a mixed-blood woman (Ojibway, Irish, and Scottish); a woman of deep and abiding Christian faith that follows Jesus and the “Red Road.”

My mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother were Status Indians from Sandpoint First Nations, just north of Nipigon, Ont. My father, Irish grandfather and great-grandfather all came from Boom Road near Miramichi,

N.B. My mum was scooped off the reserve at the age of three when her mother died because the Ontario Children’s Aid Society thought it was in ‘her best interest’ to be raised away from her indigenous family, customs, and spiritual practices. My people have hurt my people.

It has been a long journey for me; a journey of healing and reconciliation between our two families, between races, between the Canadian government and the First Nations people of this land, and between the church and Canada’s indigenous people. That journey began for me the day of my

conception and did not come together completely until the day I was speaking at the Woman’s Gathering. I can now say with conviction that I am who I am, placed by the Creator to be where ➤



I am, and that I am comfortable in my own skin. The only sad note for me is that the journey to that moment in time where I was speaking confidently and passionately, took me 58 years. In my life it has not been okay to be who I am, until this past decade. Even still, some people in the church and in the First Nations community would have me believe that I cannot be a traditional

woman who follows Jesus.

The seminal moment for me came as I was leading the parade of Nations into that gathering room on Sunday morning, drumming on my mother's traditional hand drum, and dressed in my indigenous regalia. That is a moment I will never forget. There we were, over 20 red and yellow, black and white skinned women from all

nations of the world, joyfully singing God's praises and using our various hand instruments and styles of dance all in the context of Christian worship. It was an amazing weekend. ■

Rev. Margaret Mullin is executive director of Winnipeg Inner City Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, where she has worked for the last 10 years.

HOPE AND HEALING

FINDING FAMILY AND FORGIVENESS AT THE WOMEN'S GATHERING. BY DONNA BELISLE

I did have a regular life at one time. "Kids, carrots and the white picket fence," I call it. We had most of the trappings of a middle class lifestyle; I walked away from that to continue my drinking and drug career. The core belief that I was not like others and did not deserve the love of others has haunted me for as long as I can remember.

After much mostly self-imposed abuse of all kinds, I finally reached out for help. I cried and quietly asked Jesus to come into my heart and help me. And enter my heart he did! Decades of obsessive thoughts, stealing, drugs, and alcohol were gone.

When Jesus entered my heart my attitude began to change. Hope replaced fear, love seemed attainable and most of all, I began to feel. Without this experience I know in my heart that not only would I have passed on the opportunity to go to the Look in, Shout Out conference, but I would have killed "those people" in my mind over and over again.

As a Métis woman growing up in the 60s and 70s where racism went underground and then leaked out, I became a hateful woman. I hated

both whites and redskins and me in particular. So being in a room with 500-plus women with a common goal was overwhelming. To feel the authenticity of the Holy Spirit at work is something I have no words to explain! I'm not sure how to express the miracle of feeling a part of this Christian family, when all my life I struggled to feel worthy of anything.

The highlight of this weekend was at one of the workshops when an elder from the east shared a truly painful, intimate moment she experienced with her ailing mate and Jesus. I cried and asked if I could hug her. To many this may seem normal but you see, I not only don't do hugs, I struggle with hugs and physical touch (even with my son.) These miracles to this day touch my heart and bring a prayer for those hurting.

The self-centredness I have lived, and felt extremely ashamed about, was tremendously healed and I continue to feel healing. I felt healing especially when the 500-plus people sang a cappella, praising our Lord and Saviour! I get choked up with happiness and gratitude to this day. The African-style offering still

brings smiles to my heart and face and I remember my goose bumps!

From the location to the workshops, to the food, speakers and love experienced, I truly cannot think of anything that could be improved upon. As a new Christian struggling with life and learning how to walk and talk with Christ, I give a heartfelt thank you to the organizers and the many people who made this possible.

According to psychologist Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, safety and physical needs are the foundation for human growth that leads to ultimate self-fulfillment. Anishinabe Place of Hope is providing this for me (and others in my situation). Prompted by the Holy Spirit I have given my heart and life to follow Jesus. I would ask that you pray for and help the staff at Anishinabe who show up every day giving 100 per cent of themselves and who allow the Holy Spirit to direct them.

Thank you for allowing me to share my experience. Glory to God and praise His ways. ■

Donna Belisle is a resident at WICM's Anishinabe Place of Hope. She is beginning Bible college in the coming year.

Explore First Steps

A PRAYER FOR ACHIEVABLE PURPOSES. BY RICK HORST

"As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him."

—Matthew 4:18-20

I have a friend who is deeply committed to Christ and who believes he is being called to serve his Lord in a creative, new, and large way. I encourage him to pursue this vision, but the whole thing seems stalled around specifics. Namely, there is a lack of concrete and measurable steps toward making this dream a reality, and until a defined starting point with clear objectives gets named, I fear my friend's dream may never achieve reality. Most days, his example reminds me of the frustrations many of our congregations face, year in and year out. Simply put, without a concrete, measurable, strategic plan, how do we ever attain the goals that we hope to reach in our service to Jesus Christ, and how do we know when we've achieved them?

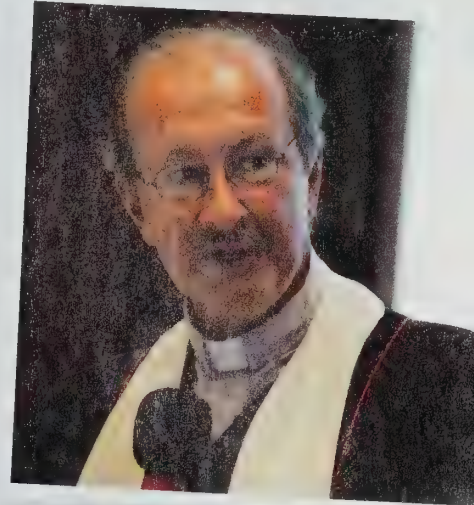
The world of commerce has understood for a very long time that objectives seldom get realized without a clear, simple plan. Many faithful, Christ-centred congregations are well-meaning in their devotion, yet short on achievables. Truth is, when we are uncertain of what our objectives for Christ's kingdom truly are, it's inevitable that any old road will get us to that uncertainty.

Conversely, a congregation can begin to find new hope and energy for faithful ministry when a specific plan with measurable objectives is developed. Such a plan is not built upon wishful thinking, but a common sense Spirit-driven process which takes into account the gifts that God has intentionally given us. Every congregation is different, primarily because each

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one has different gifts. When we direct those unique gifts toward focused ministries of hope, reconciliation and healing for human lives, remarkable possibilities can begin to emerge. And the reason for such success is because God continues to bless those who use their gifts wisely for enduring purposes.

Sometimes we stumble and fall as congregations when we dream too small. Sometimes, we dream too big and take on too much. When Jesus issued his call to those first disciples, he made the daunting seem achievable. "Follow me," he said to those two brothers, and since he intended a ministry of "catching believers," he figured two fishermen would have the talents to grasp the concept! Built upon their gifts, he



began a movement that continues to grow. But if he had told them that day that they would be the foundation of a whole new order to be called "the church," do you think their hearts would have been so eager? Instead, he invited them to explore first steps based upon their God-given abilities.

My prayer for our church in Canada is for a renewed sense of achievable purposes in every local congregation. Start small, but build it upon the gifts that are uniquely yours to offer those around you who long to be loved and cared for. And trust God's Spirit! ■

Rev. Rick Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca



Central, Hamilton, Ont.

Doris Helen Spera (née Smuck) celebrated 100 years in August. Many of those years were spent sharing her musical talents with the Central Church choir, the Bach Elgar choir, the Wentworth ladies' choir and the Stoney Creek United Church junior choir, which she directed. A party in her honour was hosted at Central by three generations of family.



New Westminster, Hamilton, Ont.

Half a century ago, Rev. Willard Pottinger was a member of New Westminster while he studied for the ministry. In May this year, he and his wife, Enid were welcomed back to New Westminster as the congregation celebrated the 50th anniversary of Rev. Pottinger's ordination.



Langley, B.C.

Presbyterian choirs of the lower British Columbia mainland made harmony together during a praise festival at Langley Presbyterian in May. Members of the host choir were joined by vocalists from Haney, Maple Ridge; St. Paul's, Mission; Bradner, and Calvin, Abbotsford.

St. Andrew's, Pictou, N.S.

One hundred forty two years of service to St. Andrew's and still counting. Shown are Rev. Steven Webb, elders Don Murray (50 years), Martin MacKay (42 years), Ken Porter (50 years), along with clerk of session Murray Hill. Still actively serving, these elders were recently honoured with a luncheon and presented with clocks handmade by Rev. Webb.

**St. Mary's, Ont.**

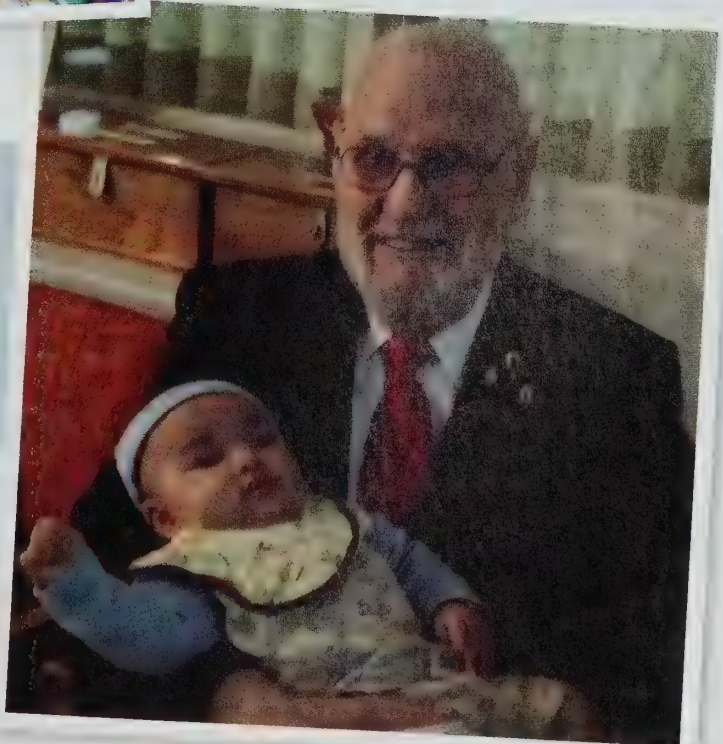
The children of the Presbyterian church in St. Mary's brought a different kind of offering down the aisle on May 14th—one in mismatched containers instead of collection plates. The congregation had completed a coin collection to support Stratford-based charity Change Her World. The \$507 raised, along with the offering from a Lenten Sunday service, will purchase school uniforms for girls in Malawi.

St. Andrew's, Woodstock, Ont.

The past and future met at Knox in April as the church's oldest and youngest members attended a dedication service for memorial door windows. The dedication was in memory of Dorothy Howlett, late wife to oldest member Bill Howlett, 95. In Bill's arms is David Ta, who was born in December to a Karen refugee family sponsored by the church.

online extra

ON OUR WEBSITE: An ordination at St. Paul's, Bramalea, Ont.; new elders At St. Andrew's, Warkworth, Ont.; hands for Haiti at Alexandra, Brantford, Ont.; and a reason to celebrate on Queen Street East, Toronto.



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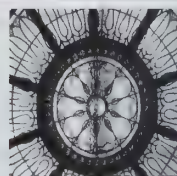
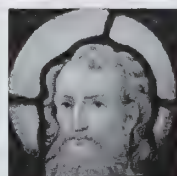
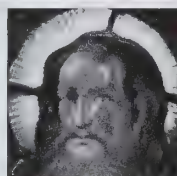
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SYNOD OF QUEBEC AND EASTERN ONTARIO

Montreal, Chambit; Full-time bilingual Korean/English ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Greg Davidson; 514-695-1879; gregory@briarwoodpresbyterianchurch.ca. Pembroke, Ont., First; Full-time; Bill Pearson, Convener Search Committee, 491 Angus Campbell Dr., Pembroke, ON K8A 8K7; 613-732-1885; bpearson62@sympatico.ca. Winchester, Ont., St. Paul's; Chesterville, St. Andrew's; Morewood; Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Jim Ferrier, PO Box 131, Maxville, ON K0C 1T0; 613-538-2582; jim_olga@sympatico.ca.

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Colborne, Old St. Andrew's; Minister (half-time); Interim Moderator Rev. David G. Cooper, 67 Victoria Ave., Belleville, ON K8N 2A1; 613-242-6927; revdavecooper@gmail.com. Elmvale, Elmvale and Flos, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Karen Horst, 144-580 West St. S., Orillia, ON L3V 6L8; 705-828-5412; karenhorst@rogers.com.

Etobicoke, Graceview; (current minister retires Nov. 2011); Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock, c/o Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church, 4 Morningside Ave., Toronto, ON M6S 2V2; 416-766-4765; karendimock@bellnet.ca.

Harriston, Knox-Calvin; Interim Moderator Rev. Nan St. Louis, 166 Birmingham St. E., Mount Forest, ON N0G 2L2; 519-323-3839; nanstlouis1@sympatico.ca.

Islington (Toronto West), St. Andrew's; Senior minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Joshua Kang, 1695 Keele St., Toronto, ON M6M 3W7; 416-653-7756; js0343@gmail.com; standrewsislington.org.

Markham, Markham Chinese; Full-time associate minister for English-speaking ministry, familiarity with Mandarin and Cantonese languages beneficial; Interim Moderator Rev. Sam Priestley, 19 Elm Lea St., Markham, ON L3P 3M8; 905-294-1633; sam.priestley@bell.net.

Scarborough, St. David's; Interim Moderator Rev. J.P. Ian Morrison, 17 Earswick Dr., Scarborough, ON M1E 1C7; 416-265-0135; ian.morrison@bellnet.ca.

Toronto, Knox; Senior Minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Pollock, 630 Spadina Ave., Toronto, ON M5S 2H4; donpoll@rogers.com.

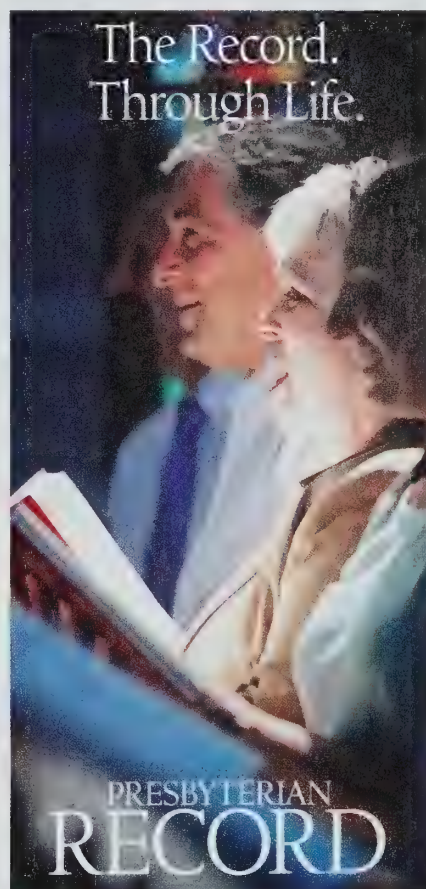
Toronto, Toronto Formosan; Full-time; Interim Moderators Rev. Wes Chang, tmpc97@gmail.com; and Rev. Beth McCutcheon, mb.mccutcheon@utoronto.ca.

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Brussels, Melville; Part-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Don McCallum, c/o Knox Presbyterian Church, 220 Livingstone Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-291-4690; donpmccallum@wightman.ca.

Burlington, Brant Hills; Interim Moderator Dr. Clyde Ervine, 165 Charlton Ave. W., Hamilton, ON L8P 2C8; 905-522-9098 ext. 22.

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Hamilton, St. Cuthbert's; True half-time position; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Philip Wilson, c/o Trinity Presbyterian Church, 720 Ninth Ave., Hamilton, ON L8T 2A3; 905-385-5984; revpmw@shaw.ca.
Ilderton, Bethel; Part-time; Carl Crossett,

Convener of Search Committee, 14846 Fifteen Mile Rd., RR 2, Denfield, ON N0M 1P0; 519-225-2733; ccrossett@quadro.net.
London, Oakridge; Lead minister; Rev. Kirk Summers, 970 Oxford St. W., London, ON N6H 1V4; 519-719-6590; summers@quadro.net.

Port Colborne, First; Interim Moderator Rev. Raye Brown, 6 Burns Place, Fort Erie, ON L2A 3W1; 905-871-3450; rayebrown1953@gmail.com.

Sarnia, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Ena van Zoeren, PO Box 421, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0; 519-845-1931; enavanz@gmail.com.

Teeswater, Knox and Kinlough; Interim Moderator Rev. Michael Rundle, 563 11th St., Hanover, ON N4N 1T4; 519-364-1622; michaelrundle_@hotmail.com.

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Victoria, Trinity; Interim Moderator Rev. Irwin Cunningham, c/o Saanich Peninsula Presbyterian Church, 9296 East Saanich Rd., North Saanich, BC V8L 1H8; 250-656-2241; minister@saanichpeninsulapc.org. ■

Obituaries

ATKINSON, Dale, clerk of session 25 years, elder 35 years, Parkwood Church, Ottawa, August 5, 2011.



CAMPBELL, Rev. Cathrine Elaine, of Brussels, Ont., formerly of Brampton, passed away peacefully on Monday, Aug. 1, 2011 at Seaforth Community Hospital. Born in Markdale on July 13, 1943, Cathrine was in her 69th year.

Cathrine will be sadly missed by her sisters Sheilagh Campbell of Brampton, Ont., and Sheana Campbell and her husband David Blaney and their children Eachunn and Kieran of Brussels; dear sister-in-law to Bill Adcock and his wife Lena and his son Alexander of Mississauga, Ont. Also loved by her dear friends Ritchie Linton and Denise Ursel. Predeceased by her brother Donald, her sister Heather Adcock and her parents Alexander and Ella.

Cathrine's life was celebrated from Melville Presbyterian Church, Brussels, Ont., on Thursday, Aug. 4, 2011 and officiated by Rev. Susan Moore. As an expression of sympathy, memorial-donations may be made to Melville Presbyterian Church.

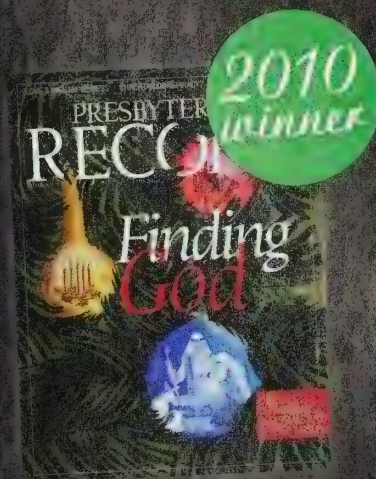


HOOGSTEEN, Rev. Mark, died unexpectedly at his home in Burlington, Ont., on Saturday, May 28, 2011. At the time of his death, Mark was actively serving the congregation of Knox, Burlington. He received his M.Div. from Presbyterian College in 1997 and was awarded the Calvin Gold Medal. He was ordained at St. Andrew's, Hespeler, prior to his induction into his first congregations of Knox, Port Carling and Zion, Torrance, Ont. Mark returned to study homiletics at Knox College in 2000, in pursuit of his theological doctorate but was called back to congregational ministry prior to completing the course work. Mark has been active in church life since his youth at Calvin, Kitchener, and he met his wife, Kathy through Presbyterian camps and PYPS events.

Mark and Kathy were married in August 1992 and have three wonderful boys—Timothy (14), Daniel (11) and Samuel (7). Mark is survived by his parents, Wayne and Aafke Hoogsteen of Kitchener, Ont., and sister Karen Hoogsteen and her husband Barry Schachter of New York City. He will be missed by Kathy's parents, Rev. Wally and Audrey Little of Stratford, Ont., her sisters Jane (Pep) Philpott, Judy (Paul) Boivin, Karen (Rev. Rob) Congram and their many nieces and nephews. ■

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BY JENNIFER O'FARRELL

Log on to
presbyterianrecord.ca to join
the conversation...

WHY DO WE LIVE IN FAMILIES?
WHY ARE ALL FAMILIES DIFFERENT?
FAMILIES IN THE BIBLE
FAITH AND GOD'S FAMILY

September is an
exciting time of year
with the start-up
of school.

I have a young neighbour who started school last year. He is really excited to see his old friends again. He loves to learn and one important thing he learned in junior kindergarten was about families.

I remember that last year—after getting to know other school kids—he noticed that not everyone has the same family shape. When the teacher asked the students to make pictures of their families, his classmates created a variety of drawings. His own family picture had himself and his mother.

Some families had a mother and a father, plus two or, sometimes, three children. One family even had five children in it, along with the parents! Others drew two houses—one for Mom and another for Dad—with children staying with each parent at each house every other week. A few pictures included an extra Mom or Dad because the parents had married again after a divorce. In some of those pictures, there were either baby half-brothers or half-sisters, or, in some cases, older stepsiblings who became part of the family at the time of the second marriage. One of his best friends drew an apartment with only herself and her grandma because that's what her family looks like.

All of these pictures describe the many ways it is to be a family. Jesus said,

"Anyone who obeys God is my brother or sister or mother."

(Mark 3:35, CEV)

May the God of peace equip you thoroughly for living in God's way. You are wrapped in the love of God, clothed with the strength of Christ, and surrounded by the grace and warmth of the Spirit. I pray that you always know that you are in God's care.

Submit your questions, comments and thoughts at presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder so we can discuss them in the coming months!

The commandments of God are given to me as a packhorse trail for my life

a “trail virgin.” I was going to hike his fat fanny right into the ground. And I proceeded to do just that.

About a mile up the trail, which was pretty steep going, I cast a look behind me to see if Peter was still in sight. He almost ran over me when I paused to look. He was drenched in sweat. His face was beet red and he was breathing pretty hard. “What ya stoppin fer,” he growled.

I turned, smiled to myself and picked up the pace some more. Another mile up the trail the scene repeated itself. Again, I picked up the pace. But I wasn’t smiling to myself any more. I was not sweating too badly, and my breathing was easy but something weird was happening to my legs. By the end of the third mile they were beginning to feel like two pieces of spaghetti. By about the fourth mile they refused to support me any longer, victims of too much weight in my pack and the Rocky Mountain elevation. I collapsed at the side of the trail.

“What’s a matter?” Peter said, sweat pouring off his face.

“I gotta stop,” I said. “My legs, they won’t hold me.”

“Just another trail virgin, huh?” Peter said. He sat down beside me and took off his pack. “Take off yer pack,” he said.

I rolled onto my side and somehow slipped out of my pack. Peter grabbed my pack and opened it. He felt for the heaviest items and stuffed them into his own pack. Then he stood up and marched off up the trail, steaming and puffing like a locomotive. “Just follow the packhorse trail, you won’t get lost,” he hollered back to me. “Go at your own speed, it’s better that way. I’ll see you at the lake.”

Eventually my legs recovered somewhat and I shouldered my pack, now a third lighter thanks to Peter. I began a slow walk up the packhorse trail.

I learned two lessons that trip; about

stamina in the mountains and about packhorse trails. I think the stamina lesson is self-evident and needs no comment here. Suffice it to say that Peter never mentioned my trail performance to me nor to anyone else after that. He not only had great stamina but it turned out he had abundant grace, too.

The lesson I learned from the packhorse trail still serves me well. After Peter left me and I was able to get enough oxygen pumped back into my legs so that I could stand up again, I began to freak out about getting lost. It was still eight or so miles into Fish Lake over ground I had never walked before. What if the packhorse trail petered out? What if it got dark and I couldn’t see the trail? What about some of the more dangerous bits of ground I had to traverse? Fish Lake was a range or two back in the Rocky Mountains and the terrain was challenging to say the least. I had plenty of worries to keep me preoccupied as I trudged slowly up the trail.

Most of those fears were because I didn’t know about packhorse trails. The rest of my hike into Fish Lake turned out to be a journey of discovery.

I discovered that the trail did kind of peter out when it went through easy terrain like a nice open mountain meadow. Here the trail sort of fanned out leaving all kinds of room for choice and the experience of several different mountain vistas, even the space to lay back on the grass and take a delicious daydream breather.

I discovered that in the dark spruce forest, the trail was so well worn into the ground that it was almost impossible to stray from it, even if night fell.

I discovered that the more hazardous the terrain, the deeper the trail was worn into the earth, in some places two or more feet deep. It seemed to clutch my feet like a train rail does a train wheel. In some places, as the trail traversed up a steep hill beside a creek,

the trail was not only deeply worn into the soil but tree roots and large rocks seemed to work together with the dirt to form steps to ease the climb. And when the trail went along a hazardous cliff above the Lussier River, it was located meticulously to maximize safety.

When Peter left me, he knew he was leaving me to the oversight of the packhorse trail and the packer who located and maintained it. He trusted the trail with me. And, after my journey of discovery, I learned to do that, too. Over the years I have walked that same packhorse trail and others like it many times. I have learned to trust them.

Lately I have been coming to know God’s word, more specifically His commandments, as a packhorse trail for my life. The psalmist says: “Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law and keep it with all my heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.” (Psalm 119:34-35) I have often struggled with how to relate to the commandments of God. They seem so negative, so dominated with thou shalt nots. But the writer of the 119th Psalm (the one I tend not to read much because it’s too long for the porcelain pew) has been teaching me that the commandments of God are given to me as a packhorse trail for my life. I am coming to discover that so much of what I learned about packhorse trails and mountainous terrain seems to apply to the commandments of God and the landscape of my life. I am learning to meditate upon them and trust them, for the journey. ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter’s Aspen: Embracing the Creator’s Fire.



I've Walked in Packhorse Trails

THE PATH IS WELL WORN AND PLACED METICULOUSLY.

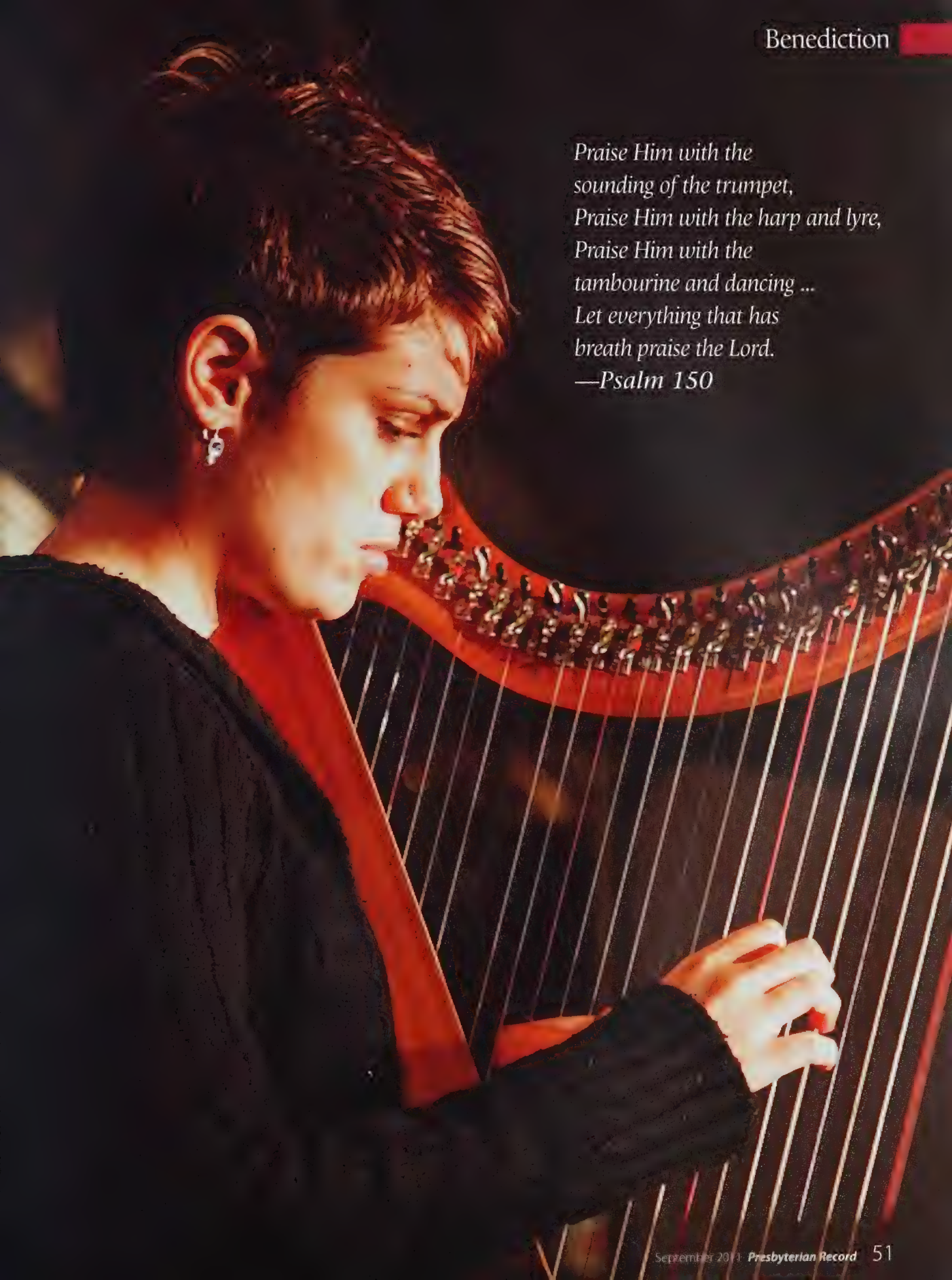
BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

PETER WAS A BIG BONED GUY, at least that's what you called him if you didn't want your face smacked. Actually he was built like a football centre, one of those guys who look big, soft and flabby but if you run into him you feel like you just ran into a train. He had invited me to go fishing with him at Fish Lake. It was a dream come true. Fish Lake was the lake that everyone talked about at high school when they weren't talking about girls. Fish Lake was fishing heaven; with a three-pound cutthroat trout at the end of every cast and a 10-pound char at the end of every day. Few had really ever made the trip. Most of us lived vicariously through those who had, just like with girls. Peter had made the trip, not just once but several times with his dad and brother. And now he was planning a trip with just him and

me. My dad dropped us off at the trailhead up Wildhorse Creek. It was the shortest route, Peter said. It was only 12 miles of packhorse trail to the lake, eight if you climbed over the Top of the World. The other route was up Sheep Creek, not as steep but three miles longer, Peter said. He had hiked in on all three routes and it was his considerable opinion that a trail virgin like me should be able to handle the 12-mile packhorse trail, but definitely not the Top of the World climb. And so we shouldered our Trapper Nelson pack boards loaded with about 75 pounds of assorted canned goods, hollered "see ya in a week" to Dad and marched off up the trail.

I was really looking forward to this. I played rugby. I worked out with weights at noon every day at school. I was in good shape and I didn't like the way Peter put me down as

continued on page 49

A close-up, profile view of a woman with short, dark, wavy hair, wearing a black top and a small earring. She is looking down at her hands as she plays a harp. The harp has a wooden frame and many strings. The lighting is warm and focused on the woman and the harp, with a dark background.

*Praise Him with the
sounding of the trumpet,
Praise Him with the harp and lyre,
Praise Him with the
tambourine and dancing ...
Let everything that has
breath praise the Lord.
—Psalm 150*



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PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

OCTOBER 2011

JESUS



EV

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EVANGELISM IS
A DIRTY WORD,
BUT THE CHURCH
WAS BUILT UPON IT,
AND NEEDS TO
TAKE IT BACK.



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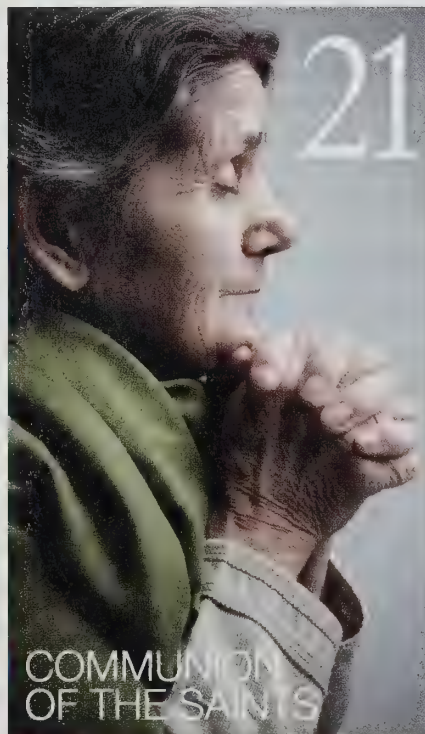
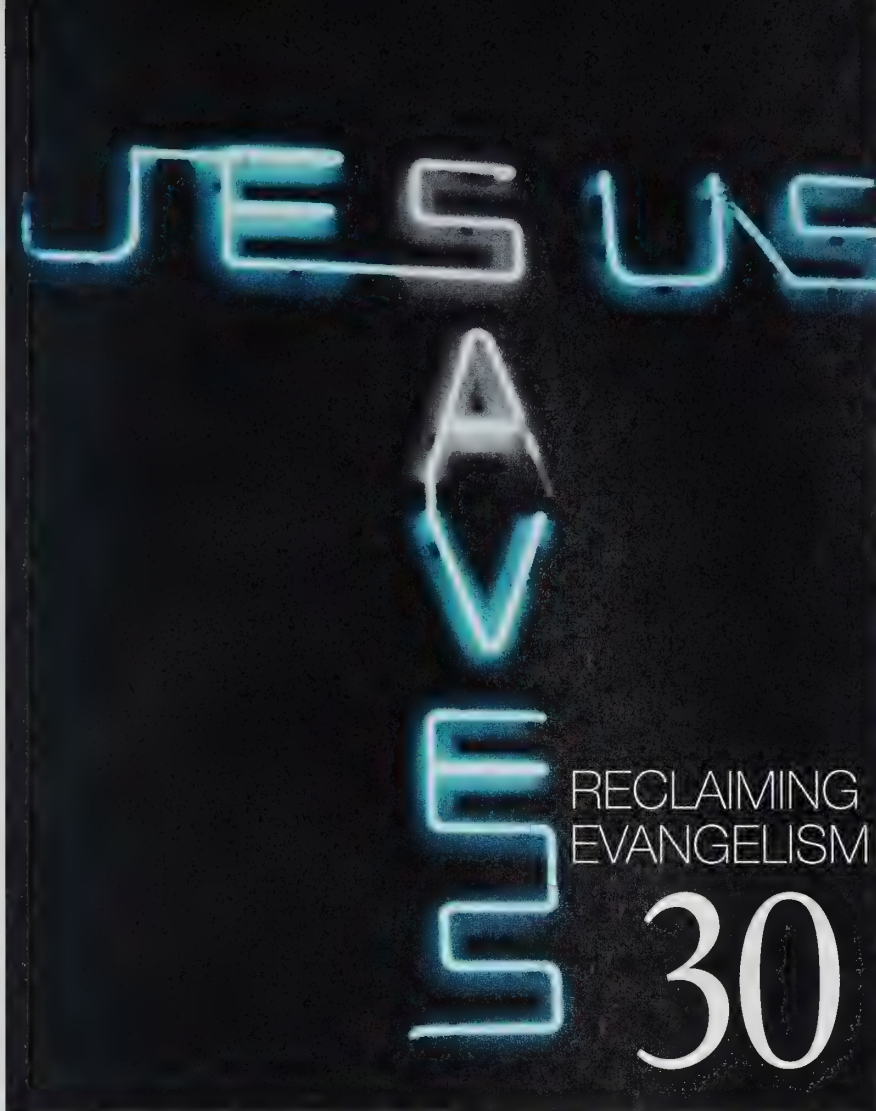
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On the Cover: Photography by
Jayme Thorton/photodisc/Getty Images

We are Called to be Angels

WHY—AND HOW—WE SHOULD BE SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS. BY DAVID HARRIS

Do you ever think of yourself as an angel? Me neither. And my family, much as they love me, wouldn't let such a perception last long if I did!

But seriously; the truth is that we are all called to be angels.

In Greek, the medium and the message are the same word. *Aggelos* is the word for both message and messenger. And it is from *euaggelos*, good news, that we derive evangelism and evangelical.

Since we are all called to proclaim the Good News, we are all, in a profound sense, called to be angels. Or called to be evangelical, if you like.

And since the primary purpose of this magazine is essentially storytelling about our faith (conveying messages about the Good News), it can be quite properly called an evangelical magazine.

Evangelism is the focus of our cover story this month, too. One of the challenges for most of us is that we're private about personal matters; faith being one of them.

Self-described extroverts are usually readily forthcoming talking about their faith. But not everyone can do that. And it has a downside in that such an approach can sometimes feel coercive.

Can introverted Christians also be evangelical?

The answer is not only yes; it's that we should all be evangelicals. That doesn't mean we all have to be the same.

One of the virtues of the Natural Church Development program many PCC congregations are using is that it helps people untie their tongue so that they can be evangelical.

Learning to be evangelical is knowing your own faith story and becoming confident enough to share it when the opportunity arises.



GOD'S LOVE FOR US
IS EXTRAVAGANT.
ALL WE ARE ASKED
TO DO IS LOVE
EXTRAVAGANTLY IN
TURN

That's little-e evangelism. But it's important. In fact, it's most of what the articles in this issue's cover story address. Being evangelical doesn't mean you have to stride the stage or declaim from the pulpit.

Nor does it mean you have to convert people. Leave that to God.

What it does mean is that when someone sees how you live and asks you what motivates you, you feel as confident in sharing your faith experience as you would in explaining why you chose the career you did.

You don't need to have had a conversion experience like Saul/Paul, either. You don't need to see evil lurking around every corner. (And, no, you don't need to be angelic!)

Jesus doesn't suggest we'll be judged by any of these things, not even by which doctrines we believe.

What he does say clearly is that God is love, and judgment will be based on whether we consistently extended our love (God's gift to us) towards others as God has extended it to us.

Read the so-called Last Judgment passage in Matthew 25. Visit the prisoner, clothe the needy, feed the hungry, etc. In other words, love God and love your neighbour and yourself as beloved children of God.

Interestingly, this judgment story is closely followed by the story of Jesus being extravagantly anointed by the anonymous woman.

Matthew's juxtaposition seems apt: God's love for us is utterly extravagant. All we are asked to do is love extravagantly in turn.

If we do that, surely it isn't really too difficult to explain if people ask us what motivates us. And that turns us into evangelists or evangelicals. Maybe even angels!

May I draw your attention to the *Record's* annual appeal that begins this month. If you've donated before, you'll receive a letter from me under separate cover. If you haven't donated, you'll find all the information in the envelope that came with this magazine.

This year, we are seeking your support for a fund for developing young Christian journalists both in Canada and overseas where the denomination is involved in mission and development work so that they can share their Good News stories with you and others.

I hope you will be able to support this appeal generously. Thank you! ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.9, OCTOBER 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

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board@presbyterianrecord.ca

ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**
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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634
Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.
Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the
Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical
Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Subscription rates. GST/HST not included.
Every Home Plan: \$19.50
Individual: \$29.50
U.S.A. and foreign: \$39 **Single copies:** \$3.95

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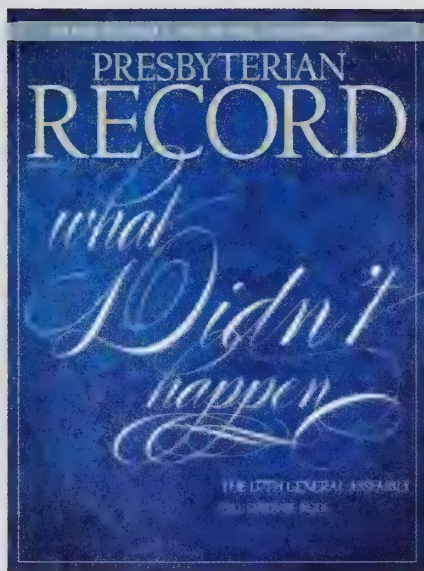
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(include label from magazine) to:

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Letters



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Living Grace

Re Solas Not Solos, September

Bill Klempa has the gift of making the Reformation teaching, "solas" understandable. Unfortunately, this glorious truth can degenerate into cheap grace with people wanting a Saviour who forgives sin but not a Risen Christ who tells them how to live. The number one cause of atheism, according to theologian Karl Rahner, is Christians. "Those who proclaim God with their mouths and deny Him with their lifestyles is what an unbelieving world finds simply unbelievable."

The largest part of the four gospels focuses on the death and resurrection of Jesus, but much of Jesus' teaching concerned the kind of living following him involved. Paul, who insisted salvation is by faith and grace and not by works, devoted most of his letters to telling people how to live.

Those who claim to be "born again" and who show little concern for justice and peace, who have values similar, or below, people who make no such profession, distort the Christian faith. Christians must show they are redeemed before people will believe in their Redeemer. ►

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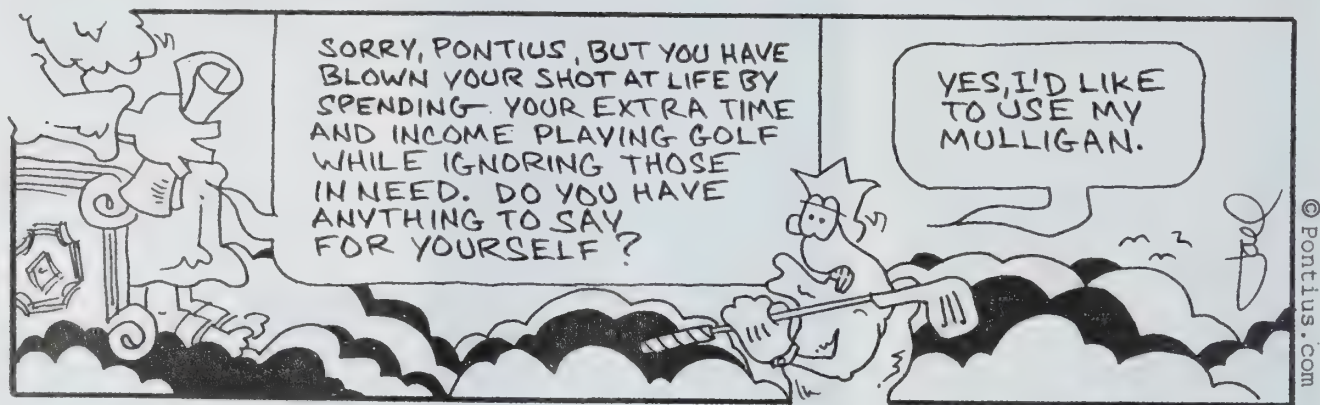
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The best way to communicate salvation by faith is the life of the woman or man with the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, truthfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

James, in his letter, insisted that "faith without works is dead." The most effective way to proclaim that the only contribution we make to our salvation is the sin we bring, is not with words, but by the life we live.

KEN MCMILLAN, THORNHILL, ONT.

Let's Celebrate Differences Around One Table

Re Is Multiculturalism Bad for the Church?, July/August

Daniel Cho has demonstrated both a theoretical and practical understanding of "ethnic" and "multicultural." This is an important distinction and his argument is clear and persuasive. It would improve the relationship of our congregations if we all understood this and helped one another become congregations with permeable walls and a flowing back and forth of people and resources. Presbyteries might want to study Daniel's offering and move to enriched relationships and away from congregations that are isolated from one another.

Welcome our wide variety of

ethnicities, but let's interact at the round table of our mutual faith. Thank you, Daniel.

TED SIVERNS, VANCOUVER

We Must Find Our Voice

Re Speak Out, Letters, September

It is appalling that the Presbyterian Church would be implicated in Ghana's recent effort to arrest homosexuals. We cannot remain silent, digging in our heels in unchallenged biblical interpretation. We cannot remain silent out of fear of disrupting church unity when God requires us to seek justice.

Being heterosexual or homosexual does not determine moral uprightness; how one lives out their orientation determines the measure of morality.

We need to find a just voice and speak up for the persecuted, outcast and lonely.

REV. KATHY MORDEN, JARVIS, ONT.

Touched with Joy

Re Kirk Discusses Gay Clergy, News, July/August

I was baptized in 1920 in Rosskeen Parish Church in the village of Alness in Ross-shire, Scotland, and absorbed from that time the loving and comfortable relationship that we shared with God and our Lord. It was emphasized

to us that God knew all our thoughts and behaviours, and while we might deceive others, our conscience would also make note of our failings. It was often very irritating to know this!

Now, in very old age, I continue to feel that I have not done as much as I could have done, and that the old conscience is still reprimanding me, in particular, with the stupid manner in which our homosexual men and women church members are treated. Of course, many congregations do not believe there might be a gay member sitting there in the pew. Shame on us.

When I read the news that the Church of Scotland will allow homosexual ministers to care for their congregations, I was shaken by joy and emotion. Thanks be to God. The heartwarming picture of the linked hands of two gay ministers was a clever touch.

This is a very fine issue of the *Record* with interesting topics, and awareness of your readers' intelligence and faith. Thank you, *Record* staff.

JOAN M. BELL, TORONTO

Does Anyone Want to Change? That's the Question

Re Impressions of a Time (not) Well Spent, July/August

As one of the principal authors of one of the three overtures Glen Davis

refers to in his critique of General Assembly, I want to assure him that the motive was not about getting the structure right. Nor would I characterize the overture from our presbytery as a "cry for help." I don't think the national organization can effect much help in a top-down way, nor is that what is needed.

We do need a reimagination of our national structure, but not for today as Dr. Davis suggests. Today is already history, and by the time any reimagination happens, today will be long gone.

I agree with Dr. Davis that this should have happened 20 years ago. It wasn't for a lack of trying and it's worth recalling a few of the efforts. In 1989, the then Board of Congregational Ministry presented the church with an excellent vision, but its priority was lost in the midst of the difficulties of restructuring the national office.

In 1995, commissioners were so critical of the recommendations in the State of the Church report that the committee withdrew all its recommendations fearing they wouldn't pass. In 1996, ideas from the think tank were lost in a debate over process. The ideas were turned into themes for the FLAMES years, but they didn't seem to have much impact in any congregations I was aware of.

By the time a demographic study was presented in 2001 to assembly, all people could do was suppress a collective yawn. Many more excellent reports were produced in the last decade, but with no results.

It was not for lack of trying, whether top-down, bottom-up, focusing on local impact or national impact, initiated by national staff or coming from grassroots. Personally, I think this tells us something about ourselves and change.

Every year of inaction makes

thoughtful change more difficult. I expect Presbyterians Sharing will continue on a bumpy decline. Because of complacency, we do not have the vision and priorities commissioners were asking for this year.

Given the brief history I have outlined, I believe it is highly unlikely that such things can be developed with the wide kind of consensus needed to truly make them motivational and enabling for our church, all in the limited timeframe we have for action. Consequently, the overtures have asked for the simplest of priorities just to get things started: let's remember the congregations and presbyteries. They can't be rescued, but there are many ways to help them cope, adjust, learn, adapt and for some perhaps even to thrive.

With this simple priority as a starting point, let us finally get on with it. If not, then the inevitable will happen: Assembly Council will find itself with each passing year asking, "How do we cut things back \$250,000 this year?"

The church—at every level and in every place—is always entrusted with the stewardship of its own future. Each generation has done that—at times well and at times not so well—and then they have passed that trust on to the generation to follow. It is now entrusted to our stewardship. What do we want to pass on?

PETER COUTTS, CALGARY
FROM OUR WEBSITE ■

online extra

LETTERS HAVE BEEN EDITED to allow more voices to be shared. The full text is available online, along with other letters that could not fit in this space.

Join the conversation!

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Evangel Hall Mission

Annual Canned Food Drive

With the school year well on its way, Evangel Hall Mission is getting ready to support the 40th Annual Ecumenical Community Canned Food Collection.

Food collected from this drive helps support food programs at Evangel Hall Mission

Here at the Hall, we rely on the food collected to help us provide thousands of meals annually to hundreds of men, women, youth and children we serve.

In order to ensure the continued success of this program, we require your help.

The canned food collection requires volunteers to assist with flyer delivery on **Saturday November 19th** from 9:30 to noon and for the food collection on **Saturday November 26th**, again from 9:30 to noon.

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By supporting the food drive, you become a partner in this important, life-changing community work. Your support makes a difference.

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Do Something

NORM GRANT ANSWERS GOD'S CALL. BY ANDREW FAIZ

Early in his book, *You Want Me to ... WHAT?*, Norm Grant tells the story of Mary Clarke, an otherwise happy and content woman, on her second marriage, with seven children, a family business, church work and a gnawing void in her soul. Too old, too busy, and with too many responsibilities to others, Clarke starts collecting supplies for Korean orphans. Which leads to an interest in social justice. And that to a passion for prison ministry. Her husband leaves, she sells the family home and business, and moves into a prison.

Of her Grant writes: "Her awareness of God's call and willingness to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit even though it meant risking her own life and doing something that made no sense whatsoever is foundational to right here ... right now moments. Her efforts have changed lives and impacted eternity. She's making the world a better place by answering the cry for someone to do something."

Out of university, Norm Grant became a successful real estate agent. He made a lot of money, conquered bigger and bigger challenges; became the youngest vice-president of the firm. He once doubled his income on one sale. A master of his universe, and yet he felt nothing.

A product of his times, he turned to self-help books. He read them by the handful. He decided to invest his money in a golf course. He meandered towards that goal; all the while another call was pulling him. "Looking back on it now, I realize that God was calling me and trying to get my attention. On the one hand, I was excited that something new was bursting out inside of me. On



the other hand, I was terribly afraid that I would no longer be a somebody, and I knew that this was an important moment in my life ... This was a right here ... right now moment ..."

Despite himself and his better efforts, Grant's life moved towards the church.

'LOOKING BACK ON IT
NOW, I REALIZE
THAT GOD WAS
CALLING ME AND
TRYING TO GET MY
ATTENTION'

That story is too good to condense and you should experience it yourself in this short and wonderful book. But, I'm not giving away much by saying that Grant had to shed his self-crafted identity and had to start his life over again. Or to quote him halfway through the book when he hears God's call with great clarity: "Ouch!"

The book is subtitled, *Risking Life Change to Answer God's Call*. After his first seminary success—an exam—Grant admits, "a spiritual mentor of mine and I started to boast about all the sacrifices I

was making to verify God's potential call here to seminary." To which he is properly chastised: "God doesn't want your sacrifices. He wants more than that."

In other words: You want me to WHAT?

This is a book of stories. Primarily Grant's but with many others, all linked to scripture. It is filled with what Grant calls "right here ... right now" moments. Life changing moments. So, read it; but read it with caution. If you have been denying that same emptiness in your soul, this is a book that can fill it with a sense of direction. So be warned; don't be fooled by Grant's easy voice and storytelling. This meditation on providence can really mess with you. It can give you greater confidence in that still quiet voice that has been calling you and which you have been denying for a long while.

You can read an article by Grant (and Patrick Voo) later in this issue. Here are two men within our church who have abandoned their own identities to seek God's call. Our denomination is spiritually richer for them. But they are not necessarily richer financially for the calls they have answered. Both have served large congregations and both have forsaken a comfortable paycheck and pension to follow calls to reach beyond our church.

We need to walk with them; to understand their missions. We need to support these evangelists whose answer to the question, "You want me to What?" was, "Okay; I'm in Your hands." ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor. Norm Grant's book can be purchased through normgrantministries.com.

SPOTLIGHT



St. Andrew's, King Street, in downtown Toronto, was filled with overflow crowds from the state funeral of Jack Layton, which was held across the street at Roy Thomson Hall on Aug. 27. Thanks to funeral organizers, a live video feed enabled mourners to watch the service from inside the church. Layton's wife, Olivia Chow can be seen on the screen.

Presbyterians Rally for East Africa

PRESBYTERIANS RAISED OVER \$400,000 BY SEPT. 16 TO HELP WITH FAMINE RELIEF EFFORTS.

BY CONNIE WARDLE

THROUGH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS on the ground, the church's aid department has been helping to provide food, shelter and other necessities to communities crippled by famine in the Horn of Africa. As of Sept. 16, Presbyterians from across the country had contributed \$404,000 to support ongoing relief efforts.

Presbyterian World Service and Development is focusing on villages

in the Goro district of Ethiopia, where there has not been enough rainfall to generate adequate harvests, and the Dadaab refugee camp complex in Kenya, where people fleeing famine in southern Somalia have been arriving by the hundreds.

The multi-year drought is being called the worst in more than half a century. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

Affairs, there are 13.3 million people in the Horn of Africa in need of humanitarian aid.

Individual donations made by Sept. 16 were matched by the Canadian government, which administers its funding through the Canadian International Development Agency.

For updates on the work of PWS&D, or to contribute online, visit presbyterian.ca/pwsd. ■

Community News



Volunteers in Evangel Hall's kitchen help prepare one of the 8,000 meals produced there each month.

Celebration and Service at Evangel Hall

EVANGEL HALL MISSION is celebrating the past and looking to the future.

The Hall began in 1913 in a 5,000-square-foot building on Queen Street West, Toronto. Last March, the mission celebrated its fifth year in a custom-built 55,000-square-foot building on nearby Adelaide Street West.

"We used to be a tiny, little location ... We had tiny, little offices and a tiny, little drop-in centre, and the homeless problem was growing in downtown Toronto," said Ann-Marie Morris, who works in resource development and communications for ehm. "We needed more space, so that's why we came here."

The new building houses a much larger drop-in centre and kitchen, a youth centre, a community kitchen and garden, a chapel, 84 affordable housing units and an upper-story patio. In this facility the staff and

volunteers offer support programs, a clothing depot, community dinners, an Out of the Cold program, youth programs, and more.

The Hall's newest feature is a medical and dental clinic. Over the past year, about 1,100 individuals who cannot access other forms of health care have been served in the clinic. Still, the ehm staff knows they can always do better.

"We have two dental suites," said resource development and special events person Paula Aceto. "If we had dentists in each one Monday to Friday, we would still have people that we weren't able to see. There's such a high demand."

That demand has grown dramatically in the past few years. Since 2009, the number of individuals using ehm's drop-in centre has grown by 40 per cent. Of course, it isn't only the services that attract people to the mission.

"Loneliness is a big problem for people on the street, so we are their family in a sense," said Morris. "I mean, some people come for the food, some people come for the family, but mainly to have a sense of belonging."

As they wind down from the new building's five-year anniversary celebration, the ehm family has an even bigger event to prepare for: in 2013, the mission will be 100 years old. Planning is in its early stages, but with talk of monthly events and a big party in the spring, the anniversary promises to be a grand affair. ■ —EW

Knox, Goderich, Ont., Reaches Out to Tornado-Struck Town

TWO WEEKS AFTER A TORNADO ripped through town on Aug. 21, the congregation of Knox, Goderich, Ont., were allowed back into their almost unscathed building.

"Of all the buildings in town, ours is the one that probably would have survived a tornado straight on," said Rev. Bill Vanderstelt. "It's mostly concrete."

And it was a near miss. The tornado veered one block south of the Presbyterian church, ripping the roof from nearby Victoria United. Knox's only significant loss was its "Christmas tree," an evergreen that the congregation used to decorate, and some shingles from the roof. With their building still intact, the congregation has offered its use to members of First Baptist, whose church was severely damaged.

Speaking to the *Record* almost three weeks after the tornado, Vanderstelt said he could see "both optimism and despair" among members of the community, and "frustration" among merchants in town.

"I think the tornado took the most



Residents inspect tornado damage in Goderich, Ont., on Aug. 22.

destructive path possible," he noted. It hit the mine, which employs about 500 people, as well as the business district and the town square, closing many small businesses during the busy tourist season. Many residences were also damaged or destroyed, including the homes of three families from Knox.

He said the local ministerial association has been doing a good job coordinating its churches' collective efforts. "[A disaster] draws you into the community. It engages you. We took part in feeding the masses—the volunteers and the people who were displaced for a couple of weeks."

As the *Record* went to print, Knox was continuing to serve lunch to Samaritan's Purse volunteers who were helping with the clean up.

The ministerial also held a community worship service in the wake of the tornado, drawing about 1,200 people. Another such service is tentatively planned for next year, to be held the Sunday closest to the anniversary of the tornado. ■—CW

Canadian Opinions Split Over Religion

THE MAJORITY OF CANADIANS believe religion creates more questions than

answers according to a poll released in September.

Although 53 per cent of the 1,129 people surveyed said they believe in God, 64 per cent said they feel religion creates more questions than it answers.

And while one half of respondents agree that "religious practice is an important factor in the lives of Canadians," only 29 per cent think "religious folks" are better citizens, and half of respondents believe religion does more harm than good.

The results also challenged the link between religious affiliation and belief in God. Twenty-eight per cent of those who identified themselves as Protestant and 33 per cent who said they were Catholic also said they do not believe in God.

A mere 13 per cent of respondents attend a weekly church service. Of those churchgoers, 23 per cent said they do not believe in God.

Their national online survey was conducted by Ipsos Reid for the television show, *Context with Lorna Dueck*. ■—CW

Renewal Fellowship Selects New Executive Director

THE BOARD of the church's most prominent evangelical association has selected Rev. Fred Stewart to become its new executive director. He begins work Oct. 1, and will replace Rev. Calvin

Aboriginal Women Abused More Often

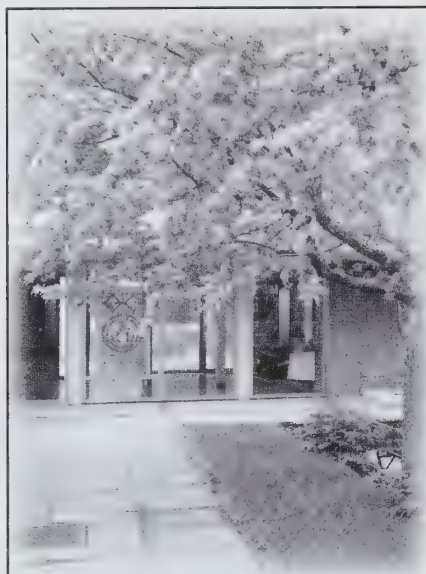
ABORIGINAL WOMEN ARE MORE than three times as likely to be victims of violent crimes than non-aboriginal women, according to a study released by Statistics Canada.

Thirteen per cent of aboriginal women surveyed reported they had been victims of violent crimes, including "sexual assault, robbery and physical assault," within the previous 12 months.

The survey also showed that aboriginal women are two and a half times more likely than non-aboriginal women to experience violence by a spouse or former spouse.

Lori Ransom, the Presbyterian Church in Canada's former healing and reconciliation animator, said the legacy of residential schools could play into these statistics. "Parents are abusive because they were abused by teachers or students," Ransom told the *Record*.

She added that solutions are possible, saying advocacy to help change attitudes around sexism and racism is needed. "We often deal with the effects of victimization or abuse with shelters and other forms of support, but we're less willing to tackle the underlying issues that lead to abuse," she said. "We need to be encouraging and supporting these women." ■—EW



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Dr. Shuling Chen, Chaplain and
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Presbyterian College Montreal

You, Your Congregation, and the End of the Word: Reclaiming Biblical Apocalyptic for the Pulpit

Dr. Brian Irwin
Knox College



info@presbyteriancollege.ca

Brown who retired from the position after 16 years.

"I think it's very exciting," Stewart said of his new role with the Renewal Fellowship. "But I'm scared stiff, too. Whenever you go into something you've never done before, you can only speculate on what it will be like. I've done a lot of thinking, and am going to talk to a lot of people who have a passion for the Fellowship. ... It's fairly overwhelming whenever you follow a minister who has held a position for many years. I hope to learn from Calvin's experiences."

Stewart convened a committee that planned three evangelical conferences for the Presbytery of Hamilton in 2005, 2006 and 2007. He said he hoped those experiences, and the many relationships he has forged with fellow ministers over the years, will help him as he moves into new territory.

"One of the things I have resisted are the one-word labels: conservative, liberal, evangelical," he noted. "No one word can aptly express anyone I know in the Presbyterian Church. I really love our big tent."

The Renewal Fellowship is made up of Presbyterians committed to the group's covenant. For information on the organization and its events and publications, visit renewalfellowship.presbyterian.ca. ■—CW

Journalist Prepares for Ministry

THE ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR of a daily newspaper in Chatham-Kent, Ont., says he is "still telling the news, but this time it's the good news."

After a 24-year career in community journalism, Andrew Cornell decided to heed a call to ordained ministry. He began full-time classes at Knox College, Toronto, in September after three years studying for his master of divinity degree online through the school's distance education program. He also began work Sept. 1 as a student minister at St. Andrew's, Dresden, and Rutherford, Ont.

"I knew God wanted me to be in

journalism," he said, noting that he has always believed in God, although he came to Christ later in life. "I know it sounds corny, but I really think my purpose for being in journalism was to make the world a better place in my small corner. You can see the obvious parallels there. Ordained ministry means shining a different kind of light in similarly dark places. On a practical level, it's about people."

Cornell also said he plans to put his experience in modern media—with an emphasis on social and digital media—to good work in a church setting, along with skills like diplomacy, deadline management, and pastoral care that he's picked up along the way.

Cornell worked at the *Chatham Daily News* for 18 years. ■—CW

Reconciliation Events

IN PREPARATION for the third national Truth and Reconciliation event in Halifax from Oct. 26 to 29, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is hosting six story-sharing hearings in various towns in Atlantic Canada and Newfoundland. The hearings will also be streamed live on the web.

According to the TRC's website, "The purpose of the hearings is to inform the public about the Commission's work and statement-gathering process, and provide survivors with time to reflect and share their experiences in lead up to the TRC's third National Event."

The Halifax event is one of seven such hearings scheduled across Canada, where residential school survivors can share their personal experiences with the Commission and others. The Presbyterian Church's principal clerk, Rev. Stephen Kendall, Moderator of the 137th General Assembly, Rev. Rick Horst, and Stephen Allen, associate secretary, Justice Ministries, will be present. Rev. Dr. Sydney McDonald and Rev. Kenn Stright represent the PCC on the local TRC planning team in Halifax.

For more information, visit trc.ca. ■—AM

World News

Mexican Presbyterians Shun U.S. Church

THE NATIONAL Presbyterian Church of Mexico has voted 116 to 22 in favour of ending its 139-year relationship with the Presbyterian Church (USA), in response to the U.S. church's decision earlier this year to allow the ordination of sexually active gays and lesbians.

Before the vote in August, there was talk of dissatisfaction with the U.S. church's decision to remove from the denomination's Book of Order a requirement that those being ordained practice fidelity if they are married, or chastity if they are single.

Presbyteries and sessions now will examine candidates for ordination or installation with the standard being that a candidate's "manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world."

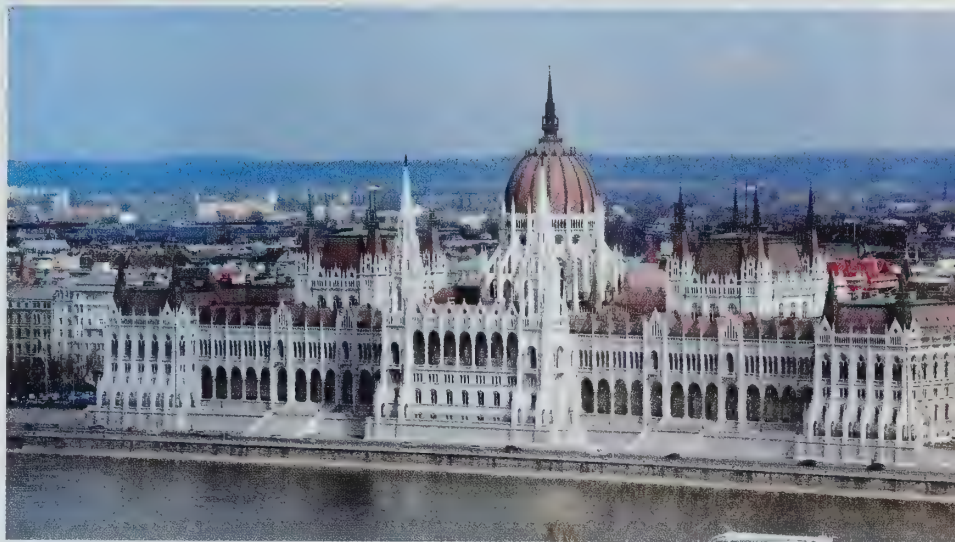
The Mexican delegates also voted not to re-establish any relationship with the U.S. church unless the change is rescinded, the news release said.

The Mexican church also considered the ordination of women to the priesthood. The special assembly, held from Aug. 17 to 19, was called specifically to discuss the issue and voted 158 to 14 to sustain its policy of not ordaining women. Any presbytery that has already ordained women must immediately revoke those ordinations. ■—*ENI*

Japan Quake Anniversary

A MEMORIAL marking a different tragedy was held in Japan on September 11. People of faith marked the six-month anniversary of Japan's March 11 earthquake and tsunami with prayer services, bell ringing and chants, many at 2:46 p.m., the time when the magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck.

About 20,000 people are dead or missing, with an estimated 400,000 people displaced, according to the



Hungarian parliament in Budapest, Hungary

Japanese Red Cross.

In devastated northeastern Japan, monks held a Buddhist memorial service, prayed and burned incense at a temporary shrine, and Baptist worshippers stood on a wooden platform near a simple wooden cross and joined hands at the site of their former building, swept away in the disaster.

In Tokyo, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan and the National Christian Council in Japan held a joint worship service "to keep in mind the March 11 disaster, remember the dead, and seek comfort for the survivors and the restoration of the affected areas," according to organizers.

Priests, pastors and bishops from Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant churches led prayers and hymns together as approximately 180 people joined the service.

"Our Lord has resurrected from the dead and shown us a light of hope in despair for the salvation of all people," said Rev. Isamu Koshiishi, moderator of the council, who led the service with Tokyo Archbishop Takeo Okada, conference vice president. ■—*ENI*

New Hungarian Law Threatens some Churches

HUNGARY has introduced a new law governing the registration of religious groups that critics say discriminates against minority faiths, stripping some churches of their legal status as religious organizations, reports *The Church of England Newspaper*.

On July 14, the Hungarian Parliament adopted The Right to Freedom of Conscience and Religion and on the Status of Churches, Religions and Religious Communities Law, by a vote of 254 in favour to 43 opposed. The new law recognizes 14 religious organizations as churches, while Hungary's 348 other faiths and denominations lost their tax-exempt status and entitlements to state subsidies.

The Institute on Religion and Public Policy condemned the new law saying it "codifies systematic discrimination of religious minorities. The Religion Law is completely inconsistent with fundamental human rights as it contravenes the principles of equality and non-discrimination."

Among those losing recognition were Hungary's Anglican, Methodist, ►

The Reverend Mark Chan, serves communion at
Parkland First Presbyterian in Spruce Grove, Alberta.

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Pentecostal, Adventist and reform Jewish congregations, the Salvation Army and Jehovah's Witnesses, and Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu groups.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada's work in Hungary and neighbouring Ukraine is not threatened by the new legislation. Through its missionary, David Pandy-Szekeres, the PCC works with the Reformed Church of the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine, a church that has close ties to the Reformed Church of Hungary—"one of the religious communities which this legislation recognizes as a 'bonafide' faith-based community," said Pandy-Szekeres. Therefore, "my work is thus far not particularly affected ... by this unfortunate piece of legislation."

Pandy-Szekeres speculates that harsh economic times may be part of the reason why the Hungarian government pushed for changes in the laws.

"It is true that some sort of the new legislation had to be introduced to somehow limit the amounts of subsidies (deemed too onerous because of the present economic crisis) being provided by the state to communities registered as faith-based organizations, when closer investigation showed that many of these communities were not faith-based at all," he told the *Record* in an email. "But it certainly appears that the legislation ... is not overly well thought out, and would certainly need to be modified to render more justice to the de facto religion-based communities in Hungary."

Financial woes have led to another change in that country—local government officials in Hungary are handing state-owned schools over to churches, unable to afford their upkeep during the economic recession, according to a story from Ecumenical News International.

According to ENI, Hungary's *Heti Vallasz* weekly newspaper reported that local councils had been forced to abandon schools in the face of shrinking state subsidies, heavy municipal debts and a decreasing number of children, adding that more than 60 had been given to religious associations in recent months. ■ —*The Church of England Newspaper, ENI and AM*

The Other Six Days Internet Learnings

AND A FUN DIVERSION. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

VIDEO GAME

It's called, El Shaddai: Ascension of the Metatron. Normally speaking, religious-based video games are terrible. Usually corny or poorly done, they are presented as Christian alternatives to popular games. But this one is different. Made for Playstation 3 and Xbox 360, it was released in August 2011 for the North American market and is winning over gamers and critics alike.

The game's storyline is inspired by the Deuterocanonical book of Enoch (and quoted in the book of Jude). As the player you are Enoch—a priest searching for seven fallen angels to prevent the end of the world. Assisting you on your quest are four archangels as well as your own guardian angel known as Lucifel.

FIND IT @ elshaddaigame.com

WEBSITE

Truth be told, this is just a waste of time. It's silly and of no real value whatsoever. But then again, that's why I love it. It's called, Answer Me Jesus. On the site is a pink statue of Jesus that works just like that magic 8-ball you had as a kid ... only this one's online. Just type in your question and wait for your answer. A good friend for anyone stuck in a cubical, Answer Me Jesus can answer any question. Just don't expect them all to make sense.

FIND IT @ answermejesus.com

THE BARNAGROUP

George Barna is a sociologist who used to gather data to assist with

marketing and political campaigns. Raised as a Catholic and now a self-proclaimed born-again Christian, he founded the Barna Group, a research team that investigates all things cultural and spiritual. His group publishes hundreds of reports each year. Want to know how facebook is affecting church attendance across the map? They've got the answer. Want to know the top five things first-time visitors look for in churches? They've got that, too. You can even commission your own research project based on your church, city or anything else you want.

FIND IT @ barna.org

VIDEO

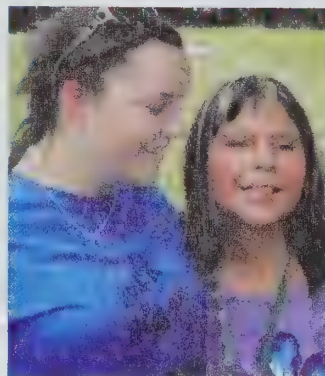
Controversial mega-church pastor Rob Bell recently wrote a book entitled, *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived*. But it's not the book I'm pitching. In one of numerous interviews, Bell met with Martin Bashir, a Presbyterian and not the usual pushover journalist Bell had expected to schmooze. The interview itself is good and fair and can be found easily on YouTube, but I'll do you one better. After checking out the interview, search "Martin Bashir – Interviewed about Love Wins" to hear a radio interview recorded and posted online. It may not sound that interesting but trust me—it is.

FIND IT @ youtube.com ■

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

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Working for a Better Future

BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY ONE BEAN AT A TIME. BY MICHAEL BIRKS



Juan Carlos inspects a field of beans in Nicaragua.

My supervisor, Juan Carlos eases the truck down the steep road of loose sand and then guns it through the creek at the bottom. Now facing an equally steep climb back up the other side, I know it's time to fulfill my duty as the passenger and get out to lock up the hubs. It is still the dry season; otherwise, I think we might have had to walk the entire distance to the farm.

We reach the first field of beans of Juan Francisco, one of the producers in the Demiterra bean project that the Council of Protestant Churches in Nicaragua (CEPAD) has recently implemented. The hope is that Demiterra will develop into a profitable business selling quality red bean seed in order to provide CEPAD with a more sustainable income with which to help fund their social development projects in rural communities. CEPAD has felt the pinch of funding cuts throughout the last decade as foreign donors have re-evaluated their priorities and directed funding elsewhere. This has consequently shrunk the size of the projects that CEPAD is capable of carrying

out and they have begun the process of creating their own income-generating projects. The bean project would join a loan program, a farm, a visitors' centre, and bottled water plant in this respect.

We are out in the *campo* (rural area) today in order to inspect the progress of Demiterra's first crop of beans.

Juan Francisco seems to have one of the better crops of the eight small producers who CEPAD is using for the project. He takes Juan Carlos and me through one of his fields to get a closer look. They talk to each other about the plants' development, disease, insects, applying this or that chemical at this or that time and what kind of yield might be expected come harvest time in mid-March, only a month and a half away.

The crops were planted at the beginning of December, marking the beginning of the *apante* cycle of beans (there are three cycles of bean crops per year, the *apante*, the *primera* and the *postrera*). This cycle was chosen because it has historically produced excellent yields in this particular zone; however, this year there has been almost zero rain for the past three months and it shows. Even to me, someone with no experience growing beans, it is obvious that the plants are suffering.

On our walk through the field we have been following a black hose and now arrive at a sprinkler standing in the middle of the dry field. The men inspect the sprinkler and Juan Carlos

makes a few minor adjustments to get it working better. Whether the last-ditch irrigation effort will make up for the missing rains is yet to be seen.

Having seen what there is to see in the field we make our way to Juan Francisco's house where we are offered a cup of coffee and, like always, I decline saying I don't drink coffee. This sparks a number of questions directed my way about why I don't like it, and a discussion between the two Juans about the tastes of foreigners. I get a stick of sugar cane to chew on which keeps me happy.

As it is with farmers everywhere, conversation focuses on weather, crop yields and prices. There is a subtle pessimism due to the lack of rain and the likelihood of a smaller harvest than was hoped for. There is no sense of giving up though; they are farmers, and whatever the result of the first phase of the project is, they will take it in stride and be ready to plant the next crop when the time is ready.

Now that I am back in Canada and looking forward to new challenges in life, I often find myself thinking of Nicaragua and the people I met there. I am very thankful to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, particularly International Ministries and Presbyterian World Service and Development, for giving me this opportunity to witness some of the life-changing work that they are involved with in Nicaragua. My internship with CEPAD had its ups and downs as it was bound to and now, looking back, I see that I learned far more than I was aware of while I was there. It was amazing to see so many of the theories and practices that I had studied in university brought to life in the field and to see firsthand what it takes to put words into actions.

Driving through the *Departamentos* (Provinces) of Jinotega and Matagalpa is something that will stay with me forever. The scenery there is beautiful, especially in the rainy season, from June until November, when the clouds creep down the sides of the mountains and into the valleys. At first glance many of the communities that I visited, or just drove past, looked very poor, and certainly many of the people there do live in poverty. However, my supervisor never missed an opportunity to point out that many families have their own land, a cow or a pig, a motorcycle, and always, that the *campesinos* have a great wealth of knowledge concerning farming and life in the *campo*. There are resources there, human and physical, and it is so important to not ignore them because all one sees is poverty. These resources are capable of doing wonderful things. One only needs to look at the dedication of the community members who

volunteer so much of themselves to the work that CEPAD does with them. One of the community banks, formed by the communities of El Matazano and El Castillo, chose to name their bank *Trabajando para un Futuro Mejor* (Working for a Better Future) which, to me, embodies their hope and spirit of determination.

There is a Bible passage that came up during the Youth in Mission trip I led while in Nicaragua but which I feel could be extended to cover my entire experience there. 1 Corinthians 12 talks about how God made the different parts of the body and that they should all work in unity, a metaphor for many things. Even though it may not be easy to see, we are all connected and we are all able to impact other people's lives for better or for worse. This part may seem somewhat obvious for people in Canada who give money to help others in need, but verse 26 also states, "when one member suffers, all the

members suffer with it." Throughout my time in Nicaragua I saw how we are connected to the people benefiting from these projects. But what about all those people who are not so lucky? How does the suffering of the people who don't enjoy these kinds of projects affect my own suffering and what is my response? What about famine in Somalia, the effects of war in Afghanistan or the myriad of issues affecting people here in Canada? These are the questions that have stayed with me now that my trip is over and I am back at home.

If you would like to read more about my time in Nicaragua as a Young Adult Intern with the PCC please visit my blog at pccweb.ca/mikebirks. ■

Michael Birks attends Knox, Waterloo, Ont. He was in Nicaragua for nine months as a PCC-sponsored intern. He returned in July.



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Letter from the Presbytery of Barrie

The More We Get Together

A PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG PRESBYTERS PREPARES BARRIE FOR THE FUTURE.

BY BILL ASHBY AND MATTHEW RUTTAN

WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE.

We've all known that for a long time, of course. But presbyteries are constantly challenged to advance God's work while, at the same time, ensuring a sense of collective accountability and faithfulness to the ministry of Christ. As always, there are various interpretations of how that looks.

In 2009, the Presbytery of Barrie commissioned a study of the rapidly growing city of Barrie and the surrounding area. One of the accepted recommendations gave our evangelism team a mandate to research, recommend and present effective resources such as materials, wisdom, programs and seminars for congregations in the areas of visioning, discipleship, program development and outreach in our changing Canadian cultural environment.

One of the helpful results of the study's recommendations was a conference on March 26, 2011. The theme was Church and Society: Cultures in Transition. Open to everyone in our congregations, 100 attendees heard excellent presentations at Trinity Community Church from guest speakers on topics such as: Music, Worship and Cultural Transition; Culturally Connected Ministry with Children and Youth; Introduction to Natural Church Development; The Tipping Point and Church Size Dynamics; and Outside the Box Ministries. Dr. Charles Fensham, associate professor of Systematic Theology at Knox College, Toronto, was the keynote speaker. Charles gave plenary presentations titled "Called into Being: Christian Identity in a Digital Culture



Patrick Voo and Norm Grant at a presbytery conference on evangelism.

and a Suffering Biosphere" and "Relevance or Counter-Culture? Being Signs of God's Reign in our Present World." During two workshops, attendees had the unique opportunity to meet with Charles and have informal personal dialogue with him.

This conference was a follow-up to other all-day events held by the presbytery last year: Eldership as Spiritual Leadership (for ruling elders) and Church and Society: Cultures in Transition (for teaching elders). In addition to our monthly meetings and separate team meetings, these events have also strengthened one of the most important aspects of our eldership: fellowship. Each time we get together there is prayer and laughter alongside the shared stories of "have you experienced this?" or "we're having a problem with that." The more we get together, the more pastoral and personal our work as a presbytery becomes.

As part of this ongoing self-evaluation and planning process, we are also revising our standing orders. Why? Many elders were wondering if our existing standing orders, which have not been revised in 10 years,

were becoming a burden rather than a help to ministry. Currently we meet for dinner, have a time of corporate worship, and then begin our meeting. It was felt that the structure didn't allow for the prayerful, thoughtful and creative attention the work our court demands. Therefore, we are looking at several options including more time for team meetings, and group devotionals and prayer interchanging with months for corporate worship. It is also hoped that the update will clarify ambiguities in responsibilities and overlap, and allow enough flexibility to ensure the current needs of congregations can be met in a rapidly changing context.

Our presbytery is also interested in hearing what was learned at the Emmaus conference held in 2010, which recommended there should be more resources and efforts directed to the grassroots level of our church, namely presbyteries. Our presbytery is looking forward to seeing how and when these recommendations might be implemented.

This is a time of collectively discerning the movement of Christ's Spirit within a very diverse context. There are frustrations and joys. There is the cross. In all things, our presbytery has been realizing there requires a prayerful openness and real desire to be practical in the help we offer each other if we are to faithfully serve God beyond red tape. It is a work in progress. And we are helped when we are reminded that we are called by Jesus to do it. ■

Bill Ashby is representative elder to the Presbytery of Barrie. Matthew Ruttan is minister at Westminster, Barrie, Ont.



Grace; Is it Really Free?

YES, BUT EXPENSIVELY SO. BY CHEOL SOON PARK

It was disappearing like popcorn. In a split second there was nothing left but an empty box. People walked away happily. In another location, a bigger crowd flocked like a swarm of bees around the box and then dispersed with big smiles on their faces. This was spotted repeatedly on the streets of downtown Vancouver during the 2011 Stanley Cup finals. Sponsors were giving out souvenirs to Canucks fans—gloves, scarves, flags, and shirts. Although people were willing to pay hundreds of dollars for the tickets to playoff games, they were excessively selfish

and unbelievably swift to snatch those low budget souvenirs out of distributors' hands. What mobilized the crowd in the lightning speed of NHL players on the rink? They were free gifts. We all love free gifts.

"Grace" is at the centre of the Christian faith. In the Reformed tradition, you cannot emphasize grace enough. As Paul said, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9) God has done everything so you don't have to do anything for your ➤

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For many Christians living in the 21st century, grace means freedom and liberty to pursue anything

salvation. This is grace—the essence of the gospel and it is absolutely free.

For many Christians living in the 21st century, grace means freedom and liberty to pursue anything. There is abundant love and mercy that will not run out. Forgiveness is always guaranteed if any offense is committed intentionally or accidentally. So it is not just the secular world that is merrily humming "don't worry, be happy." We Christians also enjoy worry-free assurance of grace. Like many others in our own generation, we often "just do it" and worry about the result later. We take it now and pay for it later. Many go on to sin now and repent later.

In most Reformed traditions, we have lost the benefit of the piety discipline. Most of us are not excited to start a day with a prayer meeting at 4 a.m., followed by five other prayer meetings and a worship service, plus a full load of work out in the field. If anyone insists on this kind of daily practice, many will take it as a joke. We tend to suppress any practice that may induce discomfort and inconvenience in our congregational life. We value grace, but it must be free from any hassle and obligation. We are convinced that is what grace is supposed to be. It has to be absolutely free.

As Reformers proclaimed "*sola gratia*" ("only grace") many centuries ago, they didn't mean something like unconditional absolution. They proclaimed it with confidence because they fully understood the implication of it: full obedience to God. "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) We thankfully and willingly obey God realizing that it is God, not us, who has done everything for our salvation and there is nothing

we didn't receive from Him. Grace was freely given to us not because it was commonly available, but because it has been made free by God Himself. It is free simply because God has paid the most expensive price for it—Jesus Christ, His own son. So ironically, God's grace is free but extremely expensively free.

Vancouver, until recently the most coveted city in which to reside in the world, was greatly disturbed on June 15, 2011, when the last game of the Stanley Cup finals was over. Unhappy about the result of the game and looking for an excuse for their misbehaviour, a number of young people started a riot that was readily joined by a bigger crowd. Many behaved like they were licensed to do anything. They burned, smashed, looted and destroyed many properties. Citizens were deeply disappointed and upset as they witnessed the attitude of those who seemingly owned the freedom to do anything. They couldn't care less. But the next morning, the city was greatly encouraged and comforted to see a large number of volunteers, including some Canucks members, on the streets with broomsticks and garbage bags sweeping up the mess left behind. They were the people who knew freedom not only meant privilege but also responsibility.

For us living in the 21st century, grace means more than Reformers' theology and complicated theory. It means our choices, behaviours, actions and witness to the world. We, as the people who understand how precious and expensive God's grace is, are invited to show the rest of the world what God's grace is and how we live His grace. It is free and we are free to show it to others. ■

Rev. Cheol Soon Park is minister at Vancouver Korean.



Communion of the Saints

HONOURING THE ELDERLY WITH BREAD AND WINE. **BY KELLY SCOTT**

A minister friend of mine

from the city said it all began because of his mother-in-law. After he and his wife took her to the church service at her nursing home, he asked his mother-in-law if she had enjoyed going to church. Her answer was quite emphatic. She had not been to church in years! Afraid her memory was suddenly failing, my friend reminded her that she had just attended church. "No!" was the response. "That wasn't 'real' church. I know the people at my church. We have music, an organ and organist and a long sermon. And the building looks like a church. I have just attended

chapel and it is not the same as church." After this conversation, my friend and his wife decided to enact the words of Proverbs 23:22 and they, "Listened to their father, who gave them life and didn't despise their mother when she was old." They decided long-term care residents and shut-ins should have the opportunity to attend "real" church.

Three times a year, at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas, his church hosts a service for seniors. I had the opportunity to take three seniors to this Christmas service. As I drove into the parking lot, I had to slow to a complete stop as the lineup of wheelchair buses ►

Some looked perplexed at all of the attention. Others drank it in like a sponge! I marveled at how little it really takes to bless the heart of a senior or shut-in

made it impossible to park. Seniors were helped out of buses, taxis and cars by family members or care staff. A doorman greeted us and helped us find our way to the sanctuary. Everyone was given a large-print edition of *Our Daily Bread*. We were treated to a carol sing led by one of the ministers on staff at the church, a wonderful soloist sang many of the old and dear hymns and then we were treated to a full gospel sermon by the senior minister. But the hospitality extended further. While we were enjoying the service, 30-50 volunteers were preparing a

full Christmas dinner. All 200 of us enjoyed a wonderfully home-cooked meal with all the traditional trimmings.

I took many opportunities to “spy” on the seniors. I wanted to see how this event was going over. Some looked perplexed at all of the attention. Others drank it in like a sponge! I marveled at how little it really takes to bless the heart of a senior or shut-in.

Does your church lead a monthly service at the local nursing home, retirement home, rooming house or hospital? For the last 16 years, St. John’s, Bradford, Ont., has led the worship service at our local nursing home in the months that have five Sundays. Five to eight members of St. John’s come each time, along with a pianist and our minister. We sing the old favourites (sometimes more than once), read the scripture (very loudly) and hear a condensed version of the Sunday morning sermon. Although the staff invite and porter the Presbyterians to our service in the chapel, many more from other denominations and no church affiliation in particular come. It may not be their “real” church in our nursing home chapel but we do our best to re-create the church these seniors relate to. But it wasn’t until one elderly resident asked if we could have communion that we began to partake of this sacrament together. He said he hadn’t had communion in the six years he had lived in the home since only the Anglicans and Catholics served their members this sacrament each week.

What an honour it is to serve communion to someone with dementia. Someone who no longer remembers their name, how to use a spoon or where to find a washroom

when they need it, will open their mouth to receive the elements and then say, “Amen.” In fact, on the first Sunday we served communion, a sweet, old Presbyterian woman glared at her daughter when she refused to allow her to have communion. The mother was unable to communicate verbally but that didn’t stop her from using her facial muscles. I was somewhat new to working in the home but realized the older woman was furious. I quickly went over to intervene and see if I could help appease her. Her daughter said, “My mother is no longer able to take food and liquids by mouth unless the food is pureed and the liquid thickened. How can she swallow this dry bread and little grape juice?” Mother won that day. The daughter relented and allowed her mother to have a little piece and an even smaller sip because she knew how much it meant to her—not just the partaking of the elements but doing so with her peers in our little church. You should have seen the look on Mother’s face as she savoured the bread and the wine!

Are we acting with honour toward these, our parents? Is the church forgetting this growing segment of the population? Or are we forgetting the continuum of care from the cradle roll to the grave? God bless the vision and the hardworking volunteers at the churches who do. May they lead the way. Hebrews 13:16 says, “And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.” ■

Kelly Scott is a multifaith chaplain at a long-term care facility, and member at St. John’s, Bradford, Ont.

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The Pharisees Question Jesus by artist James Jacques Joseph Tissot (1836-1902), opaque watercolor over graphite on gray wove paper.

The Greatest Commandment

TO OBEY IS TO LOVE. TO LOVE IS TO OBEY. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

October 23, 2011
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 22:34-46

We meet Jesus today in hostile territory. He has begun his assault on Jerusalem. He paraded into the city and stormed the temple, waving the banner of the prophets. He's in a place as foreign to him as the far side of the

world, yet his spiritual home by birth-right. He's a village lad from "Galilee of the Gentiles" working to make his presence known in the capital of religious and ethnic purity. He's a reformer at the seat of the establishment. His people are always at odds with the agents of empire. The city's leaders maintain a fragile peace with Rome.

Those leaders are afraid to risk any direct action against him. They hope he'll trip on his words and give them a case. It's the Pharisees this morning.

They warm up by asking him a question and they already know how he'll answer. What frames his words and works? What key does he use to unlock scripture and tradition? As important as that is, they're waiting to hear what he'll say next.

The words that confound the critics are mostly lost on us. We already know whose son Jesus is! Don't we? Our text today is what Jesus has to say about the commandments, the story, the scriptures. ➤

So, picture him rolling his eyes before he answers the scribe's question. "You want to know what I think is the greatest commandment? Why don't you say it along with me?" What Pharisee could stop from joining in?

"Love God with all ..." All you are. All you've got. Not first in order on the list. The one that must be remembered before any other, and no other can be spoken without this one. "Love your neighbour as yourself." Not second in importance. Jesus means, "And the other first commandment is ..."

The Pharisees are interested in this mash-up of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, but it's nothing new. They shrug and agree. Jesus is as orthodox as they are. Do they live what they confess along with Jesus? They spend a lot of time speculating, arguing over how to do it. In Luke's version the lawyer asks, "And who is my neighbour?" We know how Jesus answers him. In Matthew,

Jesus' answer to the Pharisees stands alone, as an indictment on the righteous. And a call to the reader.

What is this love that God commands? It's agapé love, passion for the sake of another. Emotion-proof love. The motive power of a community in action. The commandment calls a nation together. This love can't be loved by individuals, on their own. Some scholars call it "group attachment," a shared connection to One that gives all identity and purpose.

To love neighbour as self isn't a matter of loving someone to the extent I'm able to love myself. Nor is it waiting to reach out to someone else until I have my own stuff together. If my neighbour has to wait until I've learned to love myself she'll be out in the cold for a long time. Self-love is not a valid concept to Jesus. Nor does it really have a place in Jewish or Christian tradition. The other greatest

commandment is about self-knowledge. It's admitting I'm no one apart from whom I belong to. I'm not myself without my neighbour.

The greatest commandment and the other greatest commandment call God's people to loving obedience and obedient loving. In community. In the world. On this all scripture and tradition hang. The Pharisees have to nod to this, too. How they live it is another matter. Jesus has always accused them of lovelessness.

Often we separate love and obedience. We obey, not always wholeheartedly, but because we believe it's the right thing to do. We think believing is mostly intellectual assent. Loving obedience, obedient loving, flow from knowing who we are and whom we belong to. ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



Photo credit: Herb Gale

The steeple of Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ontario, with its distinctive rooster on top, bears witness not only to the new day that has dawned through Christ's planned gift of his life on the cross, but also to the lasting impact that our own planned gifts can have in the life of a congregation. Central Church has a long history of faithful members including the church in their estate plans. Over the past ten years, Central's Endowment Fund has generated more than \$1.57 million to help restore Central's historic building, to enhance their music ministry and mission outreach, and to supplement their weekly offerings. Truly, the rooster on their steeple has something to crow about!

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Holy Boldness

DECIDING TO DO. BY CALVIN BROWN

AS I've been working my way through the Gospel of Mark recently, I've been impressed by how Jesus confronts the disciples to step out and do amazing things to demonstrate the compassion of the Kingdom of God. When he sends out the 70 he tells them to go with the simplest message and only the most basic supplies. We are to go in the Spirit and with a companion and trust in God to supply.

This is a foreign strategy to most of today's North American church. Yet when the disciples returned from this mission trip, they came back with amazing stories of all that God had done through them including healing many people and driving away evil. We sometimes feel that we simply don't have the supplies or funding to make much of an impact in our world so we just muddle along, but Jesus calls us to realize that he himself is the provider—Jehovah-Jireh.

We often look at the glass as half empty but Jesus' attitude was to take all that you have (however little it may seem), thank God for it, and then give it all away and trust God to make it work. This was clearly his attitude when feeding the 5,000 with only five loaves of bread and two fish, and a miracle happened. In the gospel story, Jesus commands his disciples to feed the people. He tells them: "You give them something to eat." They raise all kinds of objections about the cost and impracticality of doing this work but Jesus tells them to get started.

I have had many experiences in ministry where I have acted like the disciples and determined to be practical and go cautiously, and I have found at times this caution has taken both the passion and the faith-risk element out of the project. There have also been times when even against common sense advice I have dared to initiate something that God has used to His glory and which has brought blessing to many people. One example of this was when I was ►

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pastor in Nelson, B.C., and we felt led to offer a series of summer schools that would reach out to adults from near and far. Many thought it would be impossible and no one would come. We had rented the local university and had recruited some well-known Christian leaders like J. I. Packer, and offered workshops led by local leaders. The result? People did come and there was an amazing work of the Holy Spirit among many, and people grew in ways that changed their lives. When I on occasion meet them, they always bring up the remembrance of those summer schools. I am not advocating that we become reckless, spiritual fanatics, but after many years of ministry I am saying if you want the joy and excitement that faith promises (but few experience) you need to be willing at some point to put aside just trying to do your best and instead just decide to do! This trusting in Jesus will take you to a new level of faith. Hebrews 11 teaches us that "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for ... And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."

Paul tells the church of his day that they also need to live to give glory to God by seeking to do more than they thought was humanly possible. He tells them and us in Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen."

Let it not be our generation who fails to act with this holy boldness that brings blessing to us and to those to whom we minister in His name. ■

Rev. Calvin Brown is pastor at Knox, Palmerston, and Knox, Drayton, Ont.



Susan Smith greets a woman in Kucha, Ethiopia, where Foodgrains Bank programs have helped move the community toward long-term food security.

Cradling Humanity

FOOD JUSTICE PROJECTS IN ETHIOPIA GIVE FARMERS NEW LIFE. BY SUSAN SMITH

The last week of January

2011 marked an important milestone in the global perspective of my life. This was when I departed Washington, D.C., with 10 fellow travellers from across Canada on a flight to Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. We were on a Canadian Foodgrains Bank food study tour to Ethiopia, the cradle of humanity, so-called because the earliest human remains were found there in the Great Rift Valley. The country has a population of 84 million and with that comes the enormous problem of sustainable food security. As the

majority of the population are subsistence farmers, they are subject to lack of rainfall, pests and diseases that often plague crops.

There is virtually no infrastructure, which means the people have to walk miles and miles to the nearest market. The roads are filled with people walking with burdens on their backs, beside donkeys, goats, sheep, oxen, cows and camels. If you get out of a vehicle in the middle of nowhere you are immediately surrounded by people—it's as if the bushes have eyes!



In the current culture, women are second-class citizens but the church is teaching about equality with men and giving them the knowledge and confidence to step out onto the path of self-sufficiency

Most of the country is mountainous and the landscape has been stripped of trees over the centuries to provide necessary fuel for cooking, causing soil moisture loss and erosion. To help improve the food situation in such areas, CFGB works with various partners in Ethiopia through Food for Work programs such as irrigation projects, livestock services, soil and water conservation, women's self-help and income generation groups, emergency relief programs, as well as HIV/AIDS awareness and family planning information.

The Kale Heywet Church is a partner of CFGB working with the Terepezza Development Association in the area of Sodo, which is in the southwest of the country. Farmers there now grow sorghum, maize, mango, citrus, apple, avocado, vegetables, spices, coffee, sweet potatoes, taro and cassava. The women's groups have goat programs and poultry projects. On our visit to this project we spoke with a farmer who now has 47 traditional and 21 modern beehives. His biggest problem is the chemical pesticides used on surrounding crops but he has a net increase in income of 5,000 birr which translates into about \$300 per year. He has trained more than 20 other beekeepers, each having two modern and two traditional hives. CFGB and the government each provide one modern hive. Later, we headed up the mountain, 2,000 metres above sea level, where the area was barren and soil erosion severe. But because of a CFGB program which included stone terraces and tree planting, the land can now be used for crop production. They led 12 projects a year for three years and would like to do 50 more

to correct the problem.

In the same area, women's self-help groups were established four years ago, and there are now 15 groups. One of the women, Aykale Nago told us (through an interpreter) that she has 19 people in her group and they started saving 25 cents each per week. The idea of saving was new to them and she said at first people laughed and called them foolish. But now they have 5,037 birr or \$315 and no one is laughing anymore! The money helps members in times of sickness, house damage, etc., and is loaned with no interest. Traditional money lenders charge painfully high interest rates.

The education and income generation programs that are empowering women are undoubtedly keys to solving the poverty and malnutrition problems in Ethiopia. In the current culture, women are second-class citizens but the church is teaching about equality with men and giving them knowledge and confidence to step out onto the path of self-sufficiency.

On our next visit, Ephraim from the Kale Heywet Church, a partner with the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada, took us over very rough terrain to a water diversion irrigation scheme which was mostly destroyed by heavy rains in July of 2010. Part of it is still functioning and they are harvesting three seasons' crops as opposed to one, growing maize, vegetables and bananas. Two hundred and sixty-five households are beneficiaries with one-quarter hectare of land each. While we were there many farmers came streaming over the fields, with primitive tools in their hands, to greet us. One of the farmers, Aberta Kobota, told us,

"When Canadian Foodgrains Bank began work here, it was like a desert; we didn't think this land could ever be workable. We were in tears when the weir broke because we had all worked so hard. The church didn't leave us but came and supported us. We are blessed because we have communications together. If the donors support us again we are in hope. I beg you from abroad. On behalf of the entire community I bless them and may God bless them richly."

The highlight of my trip was a homestay in a mud hut with a thatched roof owned by a young farming family, Bergene, Sara and their two small children. They treated the two of us like royalty, giving us their bed and the only two wooden chairs with backs they possessed. The bathroom was a few sticks surrounding a hole in the ground with poles laid across it; you just had to aim and fire! Supper was maize mixed with buttermilk, popcorn cooked over a fire and thick black coffee. During the evening, the whole neighbourhood came to greet the *farenji* (white people). Before we went to bed they washed our feet, an act I found very touching. I will always have a place in my heart for those warm, wonderful people.

We then headed north-east to the Afar region, a semi-desert, home to nomadic tribes. We stayed at the Support for Sustainable Development Camp which, in partnership with Canadian Lutheran World Relief, runs 12 projects benefitting 600 families. The herds of the nomads were reduced by drought but because of the irrigation projects introduced, they have diversified and can grow sustainable crops such as maize, peppers, onions, tomatoes and fruits.



The author with her homestay host family, Bergene, his wife, Sara, their two children, and a neighbourhood friend.

Now the children can attend school and they have a water well and a health clinic. This is predominantly a Muslim area and one man can have up to four wives and 30 children. As only men had been coming out to greet us, the women in our group specifically asked to speak with a group of local women, who ushered us behind one of the village compound buildings. They told us they needed a grinding machine for their grain as they now walk 10 kilometres to use the nearest one, and they also needed a water well in their village. Then, asking us not to tell the men, they expressed very strong views against the practice of

**Despite difficulties,
Ethiopia is a
wonderfully beautiful
country which boasts
'13 months of sunshine'
and equally wonderful,
friendly people**

female circumcision; only 12 women in the area are not circumcised.

Despite difficulties, Ethiopia is a

wonderfully beautiful country which boasts "13 months of sunshine" and equally wonderful, friendly people. It was the personal contact that meant so much to me on this trip. In many places they just kept hugging us and wouldn't let us go! I left a piece of my heart in Ethiopia, but I feel very proud to be Canadian—a country that helps people to help themselves. Everyone deserves food justice. ■

Susan Smith attends St. Paul's United Church in Walkerton, Ont. Presbyterian World Service and Development is active in Ethiopia as a partner of CFGB.

JESUS IS THE WAY

RECLAIMING EVANGELISM

The word “evangelism” means different things to different people. Some see it as negative; a method of force-feeding ideologies down the throats of heathens; others think it’s mystic and emotional, saved for those waving-your-hands-in-the-air types; while still others—like our authors this month—believe evangelism is a basic and necessary thing; a gentle, loving approach to not only grow the church, but to simply share the Good News with our brothers and sisters, as God has called us to do.

WORDS THAT HEAL

Sharing the Good News! BY TIM ARCHIBALD

One Sunday almost eight years ago, Brian, a teenager from our congregation told a story in worship about an exercise his sociology teacher had used in class. The teacher asked, "How many of your grandparents attend worship?" Everyone in the class of 30 high school students put up their hands. "How many of your parents attend worship?" the teacher asked next. About half of the class put up their hands. The teacher continued: "And how many of you attend worship?" Two people put up their hands! Brian gave our congregation a good wake up call that day in worship; if those other 28 students were to know anything of the joy, peace, life and wholeness that comes with following Jesus, someone would need to tell them. But how would we do that?

Even in a fairly traditional place like small-town Nova Scotia, the second largest category in the census, according to religious affiliation in New Minas, is "Those having no religion." This is what happens when we don't tell anyone. Has the church forgotten how to tell this Good News? Could we share Good News if we knew how?

Do you know why most people say they are not active in the church? It's not that they have a problem with a few lines of the Apostle's Creed. It's not because of the interpretation of scripture. It's not even because they don't believe in God. No, the primary reason given in surveys is: "No one ever asked me."

Recently, I heard of a little Baptist church in Digby Neck, N.S., that was so convinced about the importance of telling Good News—evangelism—that they agreed to offer some of their pastor's time and pay mileage for him to travel to New Minas, 90 minutes away, once a week, to tell people who are living on the streets here about Jesus. Their approach may not sound very Presbyterian, but think about it; their motivation was not to improve their own Sunday worship attendance, or to improve their congregational offerings. Instead they got it; they understood their call to tell others about Jesus.

Why are mainline Protestants, and particularly Presbyterians, so resistant to telling others about their faith? One colleague told me of the wonderfully kind folk in the Presbyterian church he served, who volunteered at a food bank, a shelter for the homeless, a soup kitchen and on various social agencies in their city, doing completely amazing things. But it would only be in their obituaries that folk in the wider community might discover "why" these devoted Presbyterians did all of this good—because they followed Jesus. They just never told anyone.

Rick Warren says a lot of North Americans are "Arctic River Christians: Cold as ice and frozen at the mouth." "Oh, I don't need to talk about my faith, I just live it." I don't think Presbyterians are cold, but they are reserved and a bit shy when it comes to putting their faith into words. Yet just as words without actions are futile,

so actions without words are devoid of meaning and content. What could help us to come out of our shells?

At a recent meeting of the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces when the word "evangelism" was mentioned on the floor of the meeting, it was almost like a figurative skunk had been released in the sanctuary; the whole room drew back. One commentator has said that evangelism has fallen "among thieves" in the church, where it has been "beaten up and robbed," by an unfortunate narrowing of its meaning to either a fundamentalist theology, a revivalistic style of preaching for soul-saving, or a congregational campaign for new members. The loss is ours.

Brian McLaren concludes in *More Ready Than You Realize: The Power of Everyday Conversations*: "...that word has been so bastardized that I can hardly bear to use it. It is (however) a word with a good heart, in spite of its dirty reputation." On the street the word is equated with pressure, selling God, as if God were vinyl siding or a hot dog; shoving your ideas down someone's throat, threatening folk with hell if they don't give in. If the word is preceded by the word television the word evangelism grows even darker and more sinister and hypocritical. But maybe it's not evangelism itself, but late 20th-century styles of evangelism that are the problem. Evangelism has been made to serve alien purposes. What if, as McLaren suggests, evangelism is one of the things that our world needs most?

Think about how you came to

faith. How did Jesus come to you, as he came to his first disciples, calling you by name and inviting you to join him? Chances are, someone came telling you about Jesus. I was told about Jesus by Glenelg Presbyterian Church. In addition to parents who read the Bible and prayed, I was told the Good News of Jesus through people like Mary Cameron, a youthful 80-something advocate for youth who talked to me; through Johnny MacDonald, who kept things stirred up with his dreams of how things might be;

can seem totally overwhelming. Yet we have good news: that in the risen Jesus Christ, the world is now under new management. Our mission is to grow the reign of the New Creation that starts when the lost are welcomed into community, when the marginalized find acceptance, when the hopeless find new meaning, grace and worth, when old wounds are healed with love, and there is life!

There is a power and a presence at work in the world to give newness, to break our vicious cycles of barrenness,

grown up schooled in hating church was perplexed; yet, in a short while she too found her way into the church for the first time in her life.

If you asked around your congregation how people learned of Jesus, most would likely tell you of a special Sunday school teacher, a friend, a neighbour, a camp counsellor, a mother, a father, a grandparent or an aunt or uncle, who just did the best they could. Every Christian can speak with the honest humility that says: Here is what I have experienced.

FIVE TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WE HEAR JESUS CALLING DISCIPLES IN A VARIETY OF WAYS TO EVANGELISM

through Carrie MacLaughlin, whose broad smile and hardy laugh warmly embraced everyone; through ...

Five times in the New Testament we hear Jesus calling disciples in a variety of ways to evangelism. Five times is pretty often for any one command!

And we do have a Canadian Presbyterian tradition of evangelism, too! It may have been the Irish and the Scots who brought the Presbyterian Church with them to Canada, but those they found here and those who came after them were not all devout Christians. Life on the frontier was anything but pious and devout. By the late 1800s, evangelism was one of the most hotly pursued issues at General Assemblies.

Long-term Christians often forget how hopeless and chaotic life is without God. The upward climb to comfort, luxury and status, devoid of meaning, leaves a core that is empty and lonely. In our society so many people live in isolation. For many, the complexity of the world's problems

fear, alienation and hostility.

A while ago, I was at a palliative care event put on by our local hospital for clergy and lay visitors from local churches. The palliative care physician giving most of the presentations, said: "What you do for these patients is more important than what I do!" She recalled assessing a new patient in his home. She asked if the man was part of a faith community or had a spiritual practice. A barrage of anger and negativity spewed forth, directed at one particular denomination. The doctor moved on. The next week she visited him, he said he wanted to speak to someone from the denomination about it. The doctor made a referral and a minister came. A couple of days later when the doctor was back visiting the patient she was stunned by the difference in her patient. His countenance was completely transformed. "What that visit helped to facilitate was more important than what I could have done," the doctor said. The man's daughter, who had

I'm not claiming that it is perfect or enough or even very good, but I believe that it has led me to a very good thing.

Over a fence, over a desk, in a coffee shop, at a construction site, a basketball court, or a podium, God intends to use you. God enjoys it when you take risks in conversations, turning them from the mundane to things that have deep meaning. What are you willing to do so that others can find Jesus? Invite them to church? Share some of your personal story? Offer a book to read? Share a meal? Pray for them? Your mission field is all around you. Don't miss the opportunities that God is giving you! Could there be someone near you who is just a step away from God, but who needs to come into contact with someone like you? What's holding you back? Who are you going to tell? ■

Rev. Tim Archibald is in his 16th year of ministry at Kings, New Minas, N.S.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Where else should church happen? **BY NORM GRANT AND PATRICK VOO**

Patrick Voo was previously an associate pastor at Trinity, Oro, Ont. Norm Grant held a similar position at Lakeshore St. Andrew's, near Windsor, Ont. Together they have several decades of experience sharing the Good News inside and outside church walls. In conversational style they discuss their experiences and ideas.

NORM: Patrick, you recently founded something called The Republic. What is it, and what does it mean to you and to the greater community, and why do you do it?

PATRICK: Our operational mantra has been that "The Republic is a home for the creative refugee. An outpost for the world-changer. A breeding ground for would-be heroes." Practically speaking, it serves as a platform to help local artists (musicians, painters, poets, photographers, and more) explore and showcase their talents while partnering with organizations that we believe are helping make the world human again (locally or globally). It should feel like a place where people can risk expressing the creative spirit inside of them—which is a reflection of the image of God; it should feel like a safe place for friends and acquaintances to think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy; and it should feel like a place where people are mobilized to

turn the attention of their lives toward others who need it.

How about you, though; where is your ministry headed?

NORM: It [is] very apparent that Jesus challenged the status quo wherever he went. He challenged the establishment ... not only within the church but also in the communities outside of the church and, he taught his followers to do the exact same thing.

Secondly, his ways of reaching and teaching people were definitely outside of the norm, if you will ... they were outside of the box and he had this way of creating a bridge for people to encounter his love for them.

The overwhelming majority of Jesus' encounters occurred outside of the Temple. They didn't happen within the physical structure of the Temple. Jesus and his disciples went to where the lost and hurting were living and hanging out and they created ministry opportunities in ways people had never seen before. This epiphany challenged my definition of what ministry means and how we do it.

I think every believer will agree that an encounter with Jesus Christ changes lives.

PATRICK: People have asked me "so how many people have you seen converted?" or, "do you end up directing a lot of people to churches?" I believe that The Republic serves to move people along a continuum in their spiritual journeys.

I've managed to build some real, decent relationships with our contributors—simply because there's value in investing in the lives of others. I recall talking with one woman who felt compelled to step into our culture pub even though she was on her way to dinner. She'd heard the music playing through the open windows and was moved to join us—and stayed, expressing that if no one else were around she felt that she'd have been crying because of how beautiful the music and space were to her. Another time I sat with someone who happened to be waiting for a friend to arrive, unaware that we were hosting a culture pub that evening. We exchanged pleasantries, and then almost immediately started into a conversation about her brother who had attempted suicide. I didn't set up any kind of counselling sign—but it reinforced for me that our strategy of setting the table for meaningful conversations was working, by God's grace. I'd call that ministry.

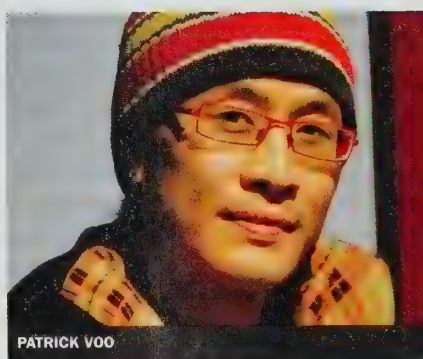
NORM: God gave me a gift of being able to serve a wonderful congregation at Lakeshore St. Andrew's. During my time there, we embarked on the "40 Days of Community." It calls for the church to put together opening and closing parties to kick-off and end with a celebration of what God has done during the 40 days. In our prayer and preparation for this campaign, we felt the Holy Spirit saying to us that we should go outside the status quo

and take the funds allocated for these two celebrations and give the money away to each of the small groups who were participating in the 40 days of community. The only instructions given were to seek God's direction at how He wanted these financial seeds to be planted in the community, and the results were amazing!

In one situation, a couple of small groups joined together to turn a one-acre parcel of land into a garden with the understanding that all of the produce would go toward the local food banks. These groups gathered together on a weekly basis for several months to tend the garden and have some fellowship and prayer time together as well. Now the seeds planted here didn't stop bearing fruit, they multiplied. Last year, Lakeshore decided they were going to use a good portion of their vacant land around their building and turn it into a garden ... a garden of hope. The congregation planted a huge garden which became a point of conversation throughout the greater community and city. All proceeds from this garden went to the local food banks, and people in the community were starting to see a move of God. Now, a couple of businesses in the city have challenged each other with the same concept; there's even a competition between two locations to see who can grow more produce.

In another situation, a couple of small groups decided to help a couple who had come upon tough times. They decided to do some renovations to their house, as it was in bad need of repair.

Most recently, God opened up a door to work with a couple of churches from other denominations. A local youth shelter is in desperate need of new facilities, so we're working towards creating a bridge where the



greater community will be invited to participate in doing something that has direct impact within their community. Our hope and prayer is that through this experience some

I THINK EVERY BELIEVER WILL AGREE THAT AN ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST CHANGES LIVES

of the unbelievers who will have participated in this activity will have an encounter with Jesus Christ and his church and they in turn will want more of him.

So, we know going outside the church has great benefits, but in your own experience, what do you think is the biggest issue that holds people back from trying something that's out of the box?

PATRICK: Control issues.

Oversimplified? Maybe. True? I definitely believe so.

Fear of or resistance to change is something that I think can be boiled down to the desire to keep a handle on things. When situations go into flux, we're leaving the known for the unknown. The funny thing is that we were never really in control in the first place.

One of my favourite passages in the scriptures is Hebrews 11—a roll call of some of the heroes (and one or two unlikeliest) of early human history. It would be easy to paint them with the broad brushstroke of certainty; that they puffed out their chests and strode confidently into uncharted territory. But I'm inclined to think that it's closer to the truth that they lived their lives with their hands stretched out in front, feeling around for the things they might bump into. That's what gives them this place in posterity—"This trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see." (Hebrews 11:1)

NORM: I agree that control is definitely something we all wrestle with, especially when God is calling us to step outside of our comfort zone. I talk about this in my book—*You Want Me to ... WHAT? Risking Life Change to Answer God's Call*—where we need to become aware of

the routine of comfort and how it can dull our senses to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so much so that we end up missing out in participating in an encounter where lives are touched and changed by the love of Jesus Christ.

There was a question that was asked at a recent workshop that surprised me: whether one could do these types of ministries and still stay Presbyterian. I wonder how Jesus and his disciples would answer that?

God has a dream and a story waiting for each of us to uncover. ►

Our individual stories weave into a much larger story of risk, faith and adventure than we could ever imagine. What would it look like if each one of us could take a blank piece of paper and draw the dream that God has planted inside of us? Would the piece of paper be big enough? Would our individual dreams be God-sized? Would we dream big enough so that there's room for God to participate in it with us or would we keep it small and neat and tidy with lots of unused area on the paper?

PATRICK: Can you be outside-of-the-box and still be Presbyterian? Well, that depends on how you want to use the category of Presbyterian, doesn't it? If we're talking about steadfastly holding

onto traditions that distinguish us as a brand of Christian subculture—whether it be our selection of music, or clergy attire, or specific calendar observances—then we've probably answered our own question. I don't want to diminish the value of those traditions which have served us well in terms of advancing the gospel in their own times. But that's exactly why they were adopted in the first place—to serve the cause of advancing the Kingdom.

In my opinion, outside-of-the-box is not about doing different for the sake of doing different. It's understanding that God is not confined to anyone's box, and that ministry of value and faithfulness can be and is being carried out in

ways that challenge the status quo. The key to the ongoing fruitfulness of the Presbyterian Church—and of the living impact of Christianity as a spiritual movement at all—is to be initiators of paradigm shifts. We seek to do ministry differently because Jesus is still alive, still on mission, and still working in and through the world to change it.

And he still calls us to step out to follow him. ■

Follow Patrick Voo at voodooou.blogspot.com and weartherepublic.org. He can be reached at patrick@weartherepublic.org. Follow Norm Grant at normgrantministries.com. He can be reached at ifechange@normgrantministries.com.

ALL ABOUT THE HEART

Christ's presence resuscitates. BY LAURA SCARBOROUGH

I was raised Presbyterian, by faith-filled parents who planted the faith-seed in me. The seed did not take root or start to grow until much later in my life. Church to me growing up meant an organ, a choir, a bulletin that I drew on and a sermon I didn't quite understand. An hour of religion; or in my case, distraction. I could tell you where everyone sat, followed the odd annoying fly or wasp, and always imagined what the choir members were wearing under their gowns.

I temporarily left the church as I focused on education, established a career, got married and started a family. After a decade of absence, I re-entered the church and, to my surprise, nothing had changed! I went

outside the comfort zone and tried another church. I felt uncomfortable, but there was an attraction. Everything was alive. The music was different, but I liked it. Guitars, drums, keyboards and singers. The congregation was actually engaged with the songs. The message was relevant to me. It was multi-generational. Although this was totally different than what I was used to, I wanted more.

This reminds me of the quote from Donald Miller's *Blue Like Jazz*: "I never liked jazz music because jazz music didn't resolve. But I was outside the Bagdad Theatre in Portland one night, when I saw a man playing his saxophone. I stood there for 15 minutes, and he never

opened his eyes. After that I liked jazz music. Sometimes you have to watch somebody love something before you can love it yourself. It is as if they are showing you the way."

So there was a shift. My journey took up a new course to find this life. I didn't understand at this point who that life was. I decided to make it a personal mission to make my church come alive. I tried to bring contemporary music into a Sunday night service. I started youth programs and coffee houses. I drove the leadership crazy with self-generated motives for resuscitation. The problem was, when it became about me and my agenda, things didn't work out so well.

Then, I was invited to attend a

WORSHIP IS ALL ABOUT THE HEART, AND THE CONDITION OF THE HEART AS WE APPROACH WORSHIP

worship conference. Again, during the worship, people were engaged. Some hands were raised, people were weeping, others were praying, and again I wanted that, but was fearful to come undone. At what cost would I let my neatly-put-together self engage freely with the fragrance of this worship? At that moment, the worship leader spoke this passage from Isaiah: “‘Woe to me,’ I cried. ‘I am ruined undone! For I am a man of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.’ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it, he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”

I became undone. I stood in God’s Holy Presence, weeping and aware of my own sin. Vulnerable before God, but feeling covered by His grace. Jesus looking into my heart, and me connecting to his. I didn’t feel ashamed, but beautiful in this brokenness, and incredibly loved. I understood at that moment the grace, mercy, kindness and unconditional love of Jesus Christ.

Worship is all about the heart, and the condition of the heart as we approach worship. What I have found is that an open heart is ready to allow God to pour in, as we pour out. In other words: a heart-to-heart conversation with the living God. Jesus Christ is the

life that brings worship alive, and by his spirit in us, he brings us alive to his presence. Anything connected to the heart is alive. A disconnect from the heart is dead. CPR: Christ’s Presence Resuscitates!

What is the heart condition of your church? How do you approach worship? Critical or accepting? Distracted or engaged? Close-minded or open? Apathetic or focused? Fearful or safe?

I have come to learn that leading worship is about leading God’s people

Rams’ horns, lyres, harps, trumpet blasts, tambourines, choirs, organs, electric guitars, drums and pianos, and our voices are all instruments of praise ... but, the heart of the matter should be—is our heart hungry for more of God’s Presence?

“You have made known to me the ways of life. You will make me full of joy in your presence.” (Acts 2:28) ■

Laura Scarborough is a worship leader, and calls St. Paul’s, Leaskdale, Ont., her home.

WHAT I HAVE FOUND IS THAT AN OPEN HEART IS READY TO ALLOW GOD TO POUR IN, AS WE POUR OUT. IN OTHER WORDS: A HEART- TO-HEART CONVERSATION WITH THE LIVING GOD

into His presence. It is a ministry of the Holy Spirit through an attuned leader to position people for a vertical encounter with the Risen Christ. Sometimes we can lose this focus and become distracted with style of worship, the choice of music, choirs or no choirs. Culture will always be in transition. The style of worship adapts to the culture within the generation.

online extra

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HOPE ON CHRISTIAN ISLAND

ONE MAN'S EXPERIENCE OF RECONCILIATION. **BY BILL ASHBY**

AS I CONTEMPLATE

our family trip to Christian Island today for a picnic at the Christian Island Lighthouse, I think back over the last eight years and my connection to the Lighthouse and the Beausoleil First Nations people of Christian Island.

I am a member of the Huronia Lightstation Preservation Society and have traveled several times to Christian Island to meet with the BFN council and others. Several BFN people sit on our society's executive and we have become friends over the years.

This Christian Island Lighthouse was built in 1867 and signalled the coming of western civilization and culture to the natural biosphere of Georgian Bay. It lighted the way for marine navigation which brought settlers, and the lumber barons.

The aboriginal peoples had already been forced off their lands to make way for farming, clear-cut lumbering and industry. The Ojibwa, Odawa and Potawatomi tribes were herded onto the Coldwater Narrows reservation in 1834. As need for more farming land grew they were displaced in 1842 to Beausoleil Island, then in 1856 were again displaced to Christian Island where they now reside as the Beausoleil First Nations community of Christian Island.

One of the lumber barons in the south-eastern Georgian Bay area hired the natives on Christian Island to strip their land of prime, first-growth timber. This lumber was then sold for huge profits for the lumber baron. Several years later, when there was no forest remaining on Christian Island, their staple food, deer and moose, died for lack of food and winter cover and the native population on Christian Island came near to starvation. They survived only by the so-called generosity of the white man.

The native people on Christian Island were then told they would have to give up their religion and convert to Christianity and assimilate into our culture. Many

of their children were taken and sent to residential schools thereby breaking up family units, and, well, we now know how this resulted in serious long-term damage to these people.



The native people on Christian Island were then told they would have to give up their religion and convert to Christianity

That was the bad news.

The good news is that we are finally waking up to the fact that we caused many of these problems. We can say we did it out of good intentions but, nevertheless, we did it and many of us are trying to do something about it.

What is so amazing to me in all of this is that the First Nations people with whom I have been in close

personal contact seem to be open-minded to going forward in a renewed atmosphere of better understanding and mutual respect. I don't know if we could be as tolerant.

I have one personal story which I hope will illustrate my feelings about all of this.

Several years ago I sent one of my Beausoleil First Nations friends a Christmas greeting. I was so into the Christmas spirit and had just listened to *Twas in the Moon of Wintertime* and was picturing the Baby Jesus as an aboriginal baby.

This is how my friend and colleague responded:

Bill,

Thanks for your lovely Christmas greeting. This song, *Twas in the Moon of Wintertime* brings me back to those days at a residential school during Christmas when I was sad, alone and away from my family. I appreciate your kind greeting and I wish you a Happy Christmas. I look forward to working with you and the Lighthouse Preservation Society as we work as partners to save the Lighthouse at Hope Island.

Your friend,

I was so humbled and somewhat embarrassed. Even with consideration to all that I have explained in this commentary, even with the sad memory of the residential schools in her mind, even with our cultural differences, she still had the grace and kindness to consider me a friend and colleague.

Our society is at present, in partnership with Beausoleil First Nation, working on a restoration project to save the Hope Island Lighthouse in Georgian Bay. What an appropriate name. There is always hope for reconciliation and opportunities for our cultures to come together as friends and neighbours. ■

Bill Ashby is an elder at St. Andrew's, Coldwater, Ont., and sits on several committees of the Presbyterian Church.



God's Love Has No Limits

THINGS CAN GO WRONG IN NATURE, BUT GOD IS STILL THERE WITH US. **BY HUGH APPEL**

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Romans 8:35
 “I am going to do something in the service this morning I have never done before,” Rev. Michael Stol told me, just before the service.

Michael is minister at Westmount Presbyterian in London, Ont. The church is strategically located next to a large mall, surrounded by many high-rise apartment buildings. It's one of the reasons the church attracts many people for the worship services as well as other activities, including an active youth program.

Michael explained that a young family from out West was visiting their parents in London. The couple had two small daughters; the younger having Costello Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder, with only 200-300 cases reported worldwide. Complications can include developmental delays or intellectual disabilities, heart problems and increased risk of several cancers, just to name a few.

This particular Sunday, the family was sitting in church with their two girls. The message was based on Paul's letter to the church in Rome, “And I know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28) It was a most fitting and powerful message for this occasion.

Following the message, we sang a song that was new to me but not to the congregation. “I was there to hear your morning cry, I'll be there when you are old. ... You were raised to praise the living Lord, to whom you belong.” The parents

and their daughters were then invited to come forward.

Michael explained to the congregation the condition of the young girl. He shared with the parents that God's special grace is His gift to them, assuring them of His presence and love for their little one, held in the young mother's arms. As he laid his hand upon the little child he prayed for Christ's strength and presence, and for faith and courage for the parents and older daughter.

“May they always know your nearness and love in the years ahead, believing that nothing can ever separate us from the love of Christ.” The prayer was followed with anointing the child with oil and giving her God's blessing. The congregation was deeply moved and tears were flowing. They responded with a most gentle applause, much to say, “We love the four of you, and we will continue to pray for God's strength.”

I have had the privilege over the years to conduct worship at Westmount many times, and still do. I always sense a spiritually strong feeling when I am there. On this very special occasion I felt it again. God's Spirit was moving. In closing, we repeated one more verse of the song we sang earlier:

“When the evening gently closes in and you shut your weary eyes, I'll be there as I have always been with just one more surprise.”

“Because in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37) ■

Hugh Appel is a retired minister in London, Ont.

Good to Great

CHANGE IS GOOD—AND NECESSARY. **BY RICK HORST**

"...and Peter said to them, 'You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now, may I ask why you sent for me?'"
Acts 10:28-29

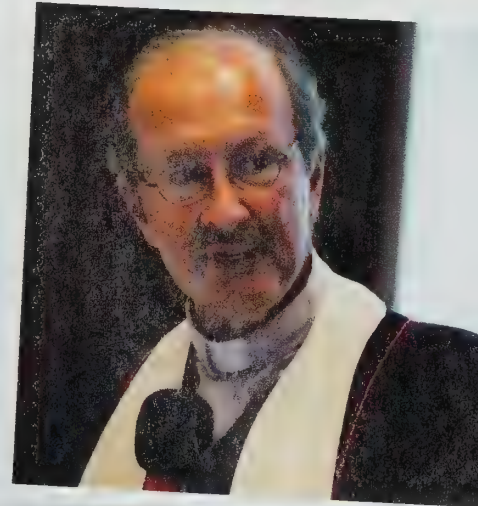
I believe there is an extremely strong possibility that God intends a vital future for your congregation which may not look quite identical to its past. I also believe this: it might involve more than a little openness to change. (Ouch!) There's that "c" word again. Frankly, haven't we heard it enough already? Well, maybe not. And maybe, (just maybe), it will be the best thing we'll have experienced in an awfully long time. I don't mean "throw the baby out with the bath water" kind of change. I'm speaking of the thoughtful, intentional, planned yet courageous kind of change that indicates that what we say about the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives is actually being given space to live and grow. The kind of change that recognizes we can be far more effective disciples for Jesus Christ if we listen lovingly and attentively, as Christ did, to the real human experience which surrounds us every day. Yes, contrary to the "light bulb" joke, Presbyterians really can change, and our loving, gracious God continues to show us how and why we should.

In his insightful 2001 book, *Good to Great*, James Collins convincingly shows

us that the enemy of achieving great purposes and results is the willingness to be satisfied with that which is "good enough." The Christian church has been content to rest upon its history. We are much too comfortable with the familiar and the easy; as though the way things were done in the past will always suffice for what the present and future will need. In our time, many believe

I BELIEVE OUR
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that the life and witness of the church is doomed to irreversible decline. But I believe our greatest years in mission still lie before us. Why? Because God is greater than our memories. We forget that the early church was among the boldest of all flexible organizations, changing and adapting in its development to respond to a future that was unfolding in new and uncharted ways before it. St. Peter, arguably the poster boy for "all things status quo," had the courage to hear the Spirit of God calling for change so radical that it challenged even the scriptures of his Hebrew ancestry, daring him to live and move among the Gentiles. As comfortable as he was in his tradition, Peter knew God was



calling him to new ways of living, serving and worshipping.

Much of the church's decline can be attributed to its failure to connect with the real lived experiences of women, men and children of our time. So let us no longer offer answers to questions which people are not asking. Let us not insist on passing out candles when people are starving for bread. Most of all, let us trust that our loving, embracing God will bless our courageous openness to change when change is evidence of truly listening for Christ's voice and taking action in faith! ■

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Dr. Rick Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

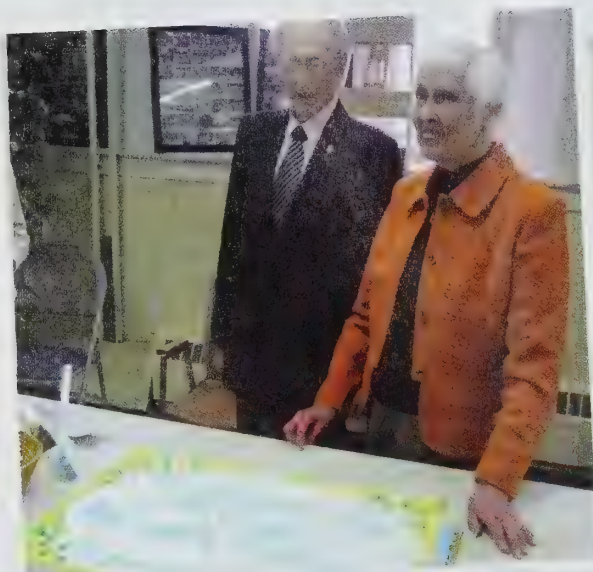
People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca

Glenbrook, Erin Mills, Ont.

Glenbrook knows the value of organ and tissue donation, since congregant Donna Greenidge has been both a kidney and pancreas recipient. In June, the church raised awareness outside its walls, organizing a community breakfast at which 24 people committed to becoming organ donors. That's a big deal—those 24 donors could save 192 lives!

From left: Nicole Poos, Donna Greenidge, Debora Lim, George Ryder and J.R. Dash.



St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont.

St. Andrew's had cake! The celebration on May 15th was in honour of the 60th year since Rev. Laurie Sutherland's graduation and ordination. Rev. Sutherland, seen with his wife (also of 60 years), Elizabeth, has faithfully attended the church since his retirement in 1991.



Central, Cambridge, Ont.

Central is making music in a big way with a new nine-foot, two-inch concert grand piano. The instrument was dedicated in June, despite delays in fundraising when the session generously diverted \$1,100 from the piano fund to Rachel's Home, an orphanage in Lesotho, Africa.

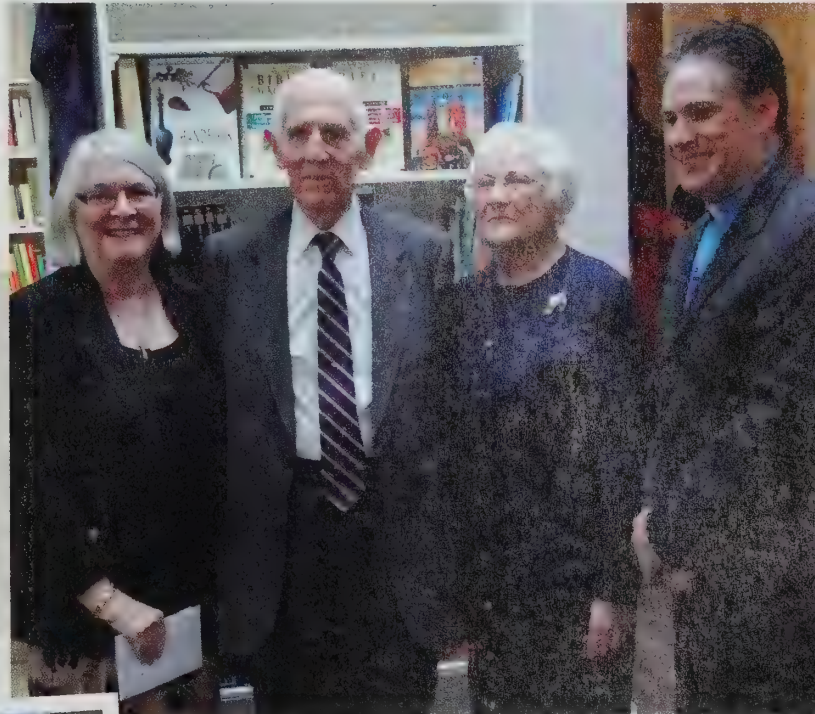


Chapel Place, Markham, Ont.

More than 36 seniors from Chapel Place celebrated the 72nd birthday of associate minister Rev. Anwar Hanna during their 18th annual seniors' conference at Fair Havens in June. Besides cake and fellowship, the four-day conference also featured three speakers. The seniors group is grateful to the Presbytery of Oak Ridges for its continued support of Rev. Hanna.

Fairview, Vancouver, B.C.

Servant leadership—it's not an oxymoron. It's a thing of mystery, filled with grace. Dr. William Walker has been a living embodiment, serving 60 years on session, with 45 of those as clerk, at Fairview. Only fitting then that a Bible study collection in his honour was unveiled last November upon his retirement as clerk. Walker is seen here with his wife, Margaret, Kit Schindell, the new clerk, and Rev. Grant Wilson.



First, Stellarton, N.S.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism was celebrated at First Presbyterian on Mother's Day and Christian Family Sunday. Here, Rev. Charles McPherson stands with beaming grandparents Earla and Stan Mayich and their newly baptized granddaughter, Alyssa Rose Nadine Mayich Morrison.

online extra

ON OUR WEBSITE: Rev. Andrew MacDonald is ordained at First, Stellarton, N.S.; Rev. Vicki Homes is inducted at St. Peter's, Madoc, Ont.; three choir members give 160 years of service in Stratford, Ont.; Thornhill, Ont., gets a new organ; and Durham, Pictou, N.S., knows how to party!

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Moderator Rev. Sam Priestley, 19 Elm Lea St., Markham, ON L3P 3M8; 905-294-1633; sam.priestley@bell.net.

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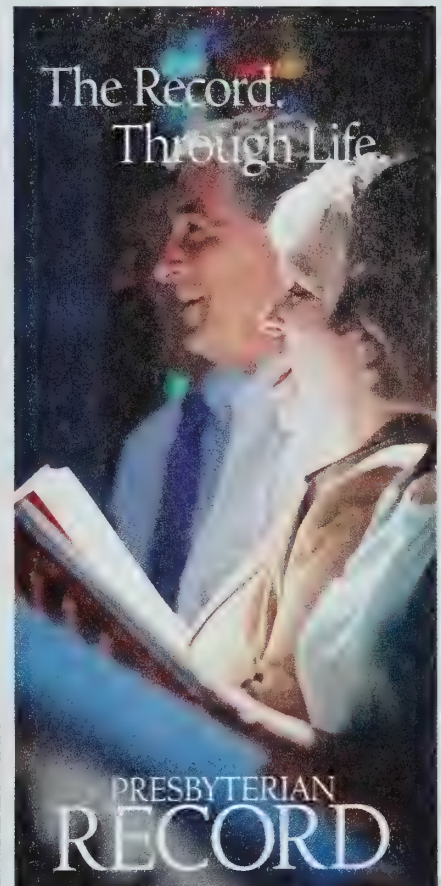
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Sarnia, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Ena van Zoeren, PO Box 421, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0; 519-845-1931; enavanz@gmail.com.

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T3A 1V7; 403-288-0544; b.smith@vapc.ca.
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Synod staff person; Full-time; Location:
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Wong; pastor.morgan@vancpc.ca.

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Heath; 250-860-6051;

bntheredsh@gmail.com;

www.pccweb.ca/Knox-Vernon.

Victoria, Trinity; Interim Moderator Rev.
Irwin Cunningham, c/o Saanich Peninsula
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Rd., North Saanich, BC V8L 1H8; 250-656-
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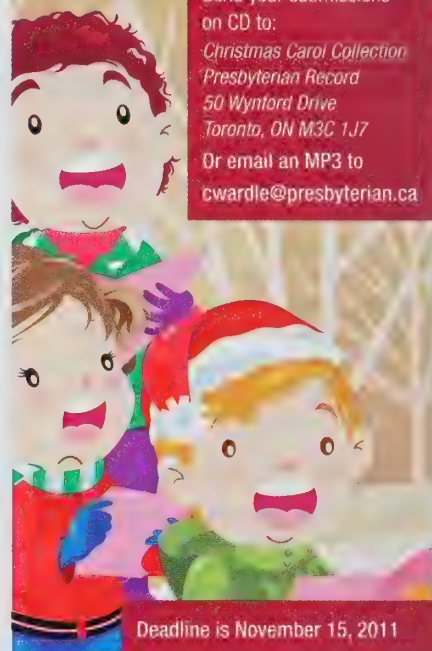
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Attention - Choir Director position

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Submit your church's Christmas
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EXECUTIVE POSITION

WITHIN THE LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY

Due to the retirement of the incumbent in June 2012,
The Presbyterian Church in Canada, through the Life and
Mission Agency, is inviting applications for the executive
position of Associate Secretary, International Ministries at
the national office in Toronto. The Associate Secretary will
coordinate and administer the work of international
ministries, including, in consultation with our overseas
partners, the appointment of overseas staff and volunteers.
A complete position description is available on the
webpage at www.presbyterian.ca



Applications should be submitted to: The General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency
50 Wynford Dr. Toronto, ON M3C 1J7 Email: rfee@presbyterian.ca

The deadline for receiving applications is DECEMBER 15TH, 2011

Faithfully Serving

Updates from the **Life & Mission Agency**

www.presbyterian.ca/lma

October 2011

1-800-619-7301 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7



Advent Resources

The Advent season is just weeks away. The Life and Mission Agency maintains a special page on the website that contains all Advent-related resources including worship planners, calendars, readings and more.

Visit presbyterian.ca/advent to access these resources.

Website Changes

The main denominational website at presbyterian.ca will be undergoing major changes throughout October and November.

The new site will be easier to read, easier to navigate and more flexible to our ever-changing online needs.

The **Communications Office** welcomes and encourages any feedback on the changes: communications@presbyterian.ca

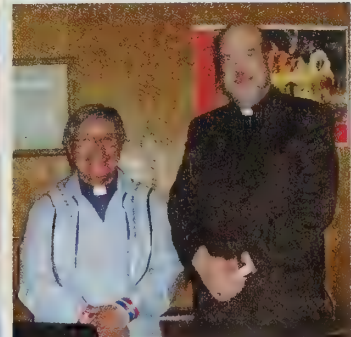
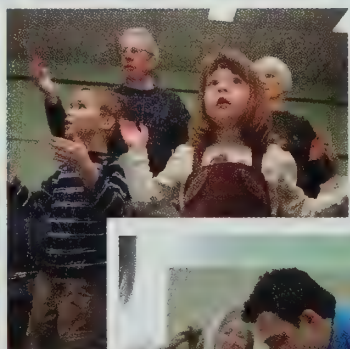
Moderator's Trip

The annual Moderator's Trip for 2011 will take place October 3rd to 20th.

The Moderator of the 137th General Assembly, Rev. Dr. Rick Horst, will embark on an exposure tour of the Middle East. Travelling with Rev. Horst will be his wife, Rev. Karen Horst, and a party of six others, including LMA Associate Secretaries Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace (**International Ministries**) and Mr. Stephen Allen (**Justice Ministries**). The party will visit PCC partners in Lebanon and in Israel/Palestine.

Arrangements for the trip were made by International Ministries in collaboration with the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) of the Middle East Council of Churches.

The location for the trip was set in response to the motion approved at the 137th General Assembly suggesting the Middle East as the locale for the Moderator's Trip this year.



Mission Blogs

Each of our overseas mission staff now have a blog where you can follow along as they work to proclaim Christ as representatives of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

presbyterian.ca/missionstaff

2012 Calendar

The 2012 wall calendar is now available for order from the Bookroom. The theme for 2012 is "**Go. Learn. Serve.**" highlighting just some of the many mission trips and experiences available to Presbyterians.

presbyterian.ca/calendar

Canada Youth 2012

The PCC's national youth conference takes place at Brock University from July 3-8, 2012.

Registration is now open. Visit the website for details about the event and registration information. canadayouth.ca



www.flickr.com/pccconnect



WHAT IS A HERO?

By Erin Walton

Summer 2011 was the season of heroes!

With the Green Lantern, Captain America, Thor and Wonder Woman in movie theatres, it was fun to get caught up in all the action, and the forces of good over evil.

While it's easy to get carried away with the Hollywood hype over heroes, it's important to remember there are real stories of heroism around us every day.

In our Bible readings and in our daily lives.

Who is your favourite superhero and why?

What makes someone a hero?

Is there a real superhero in your life?

Log on to presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder

WATCH SOME AMAZING STORIES OF BIBLE HEROES IN SPECTACULAR VIDEO!
THEN SHARE WITH US A STORY OF A REAL SUPERHERO IN YOUR LIFE.

AND...

- FIND YOUR INNER HERO
- STAND UP FOR SOMETHING OR YOU'LL FALL FOR EVERYTHING

SUBMIT your questions, comments and thoughts to presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder so we can discuss them in the coming months!

Memorial stones do speak, but only in as much as the stories can still be told by the living

as I stared at the old writing on the gravestones, some of it hardly legible any more. There was the person's name, usually the full name, then the birth date and the date of death. Quite often there was some special theme as well—a rendering of a flower or mountain or a bit of scripture perhaps. But what caught my attention more than anything else was the hyphen. It was always there, carved in stone, birth on one side, death on the other.

Steven Farrar writes in *Getting There*: “The hyphen represents that individual's whole life—his or her entire stay on earth, whether long or short, happy or tragic, glorious or shameful. You tend to look at the two dates, the beginning and the end, but the real story is in the hyphen.” Instinctively that's what happened for me. As I gazed at the headstone of a dearly departed, I began to wonder about the hyphen. I pondered their life, tried to put together the bits and pieces that I knew from sketchy family lore. The trips to the graveyard were always followed with long conversations with those still living, usually on the phone. What about the hyphen? What can you tell me about the person's life? It seemed like I literally had to drag the stories out of family members.

And what amazing stories I discovered. I learned about a heroic life with breast cancer long before there was any treatment available, about a couple's life dedicated to harsh coastal missions and booming interior mining towns, about a general store with a mortuary attached to the side, about a brave confrontation with an angry miner's mob to keep the peace, about a disheartening lifelong battle with alcoholism, about a struggle with depression that ended with a dear relative wading out to her death, about dreams joyfully fulfilled and sadly frustrated, about life and faith.

What happened to me in this whole process was that I began to build an appreciation of my own hyphen. As long as I lived, my hyphen was still being slowly carved out. And as I



discovered what made up the hyphens of my dead relatives I came to realize that the cancer that seemed to be taking over my whole life as I tried desperately to push it away, was really part of my life, part of my hyphen. It wasn't how I battled the thing that was so important to me but how I lived with it. The cancer became just another part of the hyphen, along with the other stuff like kids having bike wrecks and puppies piddling on the carpets, and grandfathers dying and hard work being well done and fishing trips and sunsets and such. This was a huge life-rattling transformation for me, coming to appreciate my own hyphen, coming to realize it wasn't about winning and losing, about birthing and dying, it was about how I lived my life with all its challenges and joys. My hyphen was the story of my life and I got to write another chapter every day until it became bracketed by those two not so ominous dates. And someday, when the story is fully written and my hyphen is engraved into cold hard stone, perhaps

it will inspire some other family member facing a life crisis by cruising the graveyard.

But it really shouldn't have to be this way. You really shouldn't have to cruise graveyards to discover the life transforming stories of your family members. Memorial stones do speak, but only in as much as the stories can still be told by the living. That's how memorials work. When someone asks: what do these stones mean, Joshua? There has to be someone living to tell the life-transforming story of crossing the Jordan River (Joshua 4.3). When a child asks: what does this bread and wine mean, grandfather? The saving story of Sinai and Golgotha have to be told and retold by a living person. Our Bibles are continually affirming the importance of storytelling to life. Our problem is that we are no longer a storytelling people.

This month ends with All Saints Day. It's a day meant for discovering hyphens, for telling the stories of all the saints. So what would happen if all the saints gathered at church on All Saints Eve: grandfathers, grandmothers, parents, kids, especially the kids, and all the saints told real stories about real life and real faith? Shucks, make a vigil out of it and stay all night. Bring cake. The kids would love it. What would happen if we took this one small step of recovering what it means to be a storytelling people, just like in the Bible? And I wonder, what would happen if this storytelling somehow leaked back into our families and our family dinner tables? ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



Storytelling People

THERE'S A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT THE HYPHEN.

BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

"YOU WANT TO DO WHAT?" Linda asked.

"I want to visit my dead relatives," I said.

"What on earth for?"

"I don't know, it just seems important at this stage of things," I said.

"I think it seems morose," Linda said. "Better that you focus on the living and upon positive things."

Looking back 32 years, I can appreciate how she must have felt. I was 29 years old. I had just come through two years of what had been diagnosed as clinical depression but which turned out to be a wicked disguise for a fourth stage non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. For two years my life had been

overwhelmed by blackness and negativity and tears; and then came the cancer diagnosis. It was a bleak prognosis and death now seemed immanent.

Better to focus on living and on the positive.

But I couldn't help it. I seemed compelled to dig up my dead relatives. So that summer, between chemotherapy treatments, we would load our two little boys and sandwiches into the Volvo and drive to yet another graveyard for a picnic. I often wondered what I was doing as I wandered between the ancient gravestones, or maybe I wondered what God was doing, but somehow I felt oddly at peace there. The surprising thing was what seemed to catch my attention

continued on page 49

Entry Deadline: November 1st, 2011

2011 Christmas Cover Art Contest

Each winter, we fill our December issue with artwork we receive from our annual Christmas Cover Art Contest. We'll choose one winning entry to run on our front cover, and many others will be featured throughout the entire magazine. **This contest is open to all ages and all styles of art.**



Send your Christmas-themed art
on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet to:
Presbyterian Record
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Please be sure to write your name,
age and your church's information
on the back of each entry.

Deadline is November 1st, 2011

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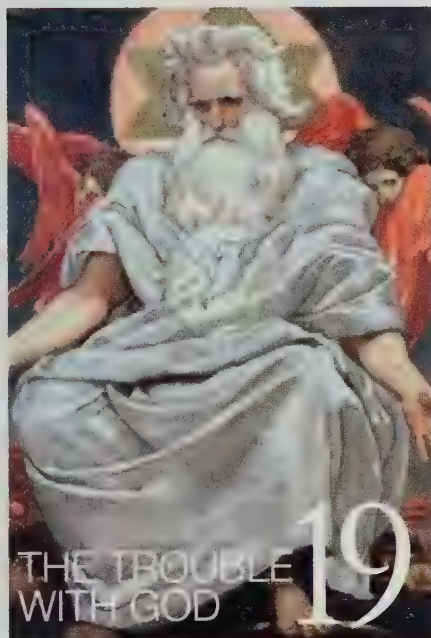
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On the Cover: Photography by
Paul Jeffrey/ACT Alliance

Beyond Sunday School Faith

REFLECTION IS NEEDED FOR A MATURE BELIEF. BY DAVID HARRIS

I recently travelled to Stratford, Ont., to see *Jesus Christ Superstar* for the first time in my life. The rock musical hit the stage in 1971, the same year as *Godspell*. Between them, they seriously rocked the church world.

I think I was perhaps 11 or 12 when the ripple effect created some waves in the small Nova Scotia town where I was living.

A troupe wanted to stage one of these shows in town. Several classmates were very keen. A number of them had recently “found religion” in a new and very lively church.

Many church stalwarts in town were not so keen, however. Although I really knew nothing about the proposed production, I defended the anti-show position.

Looking back some 40 years later, it struck me how often Christians end up in this defensive posture: a Sunday school understanding of faith railing in ignorance against a perceived evil.

Why does this happen?

Most pointedly, why do we settle for a Sunday school level of understanding of a belief as complex and subtle as Christianity? Those of us who are parents would be appalled if our children left school with such a primitive education. Shoddy, we’d call it.

But when it comes to faith, we are content to accept an elementary grasp of the principles and become upset when others challenge our immature perceptions and prejudices.

In nearly 15 years as a religion editor, I have seen dozens of letters angrily denouncing a published opinion that the writer had learned was wrong in Sunday school. Didn’t these PhDs ever go to Sunday school?

“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I



WHEN IT
COMES TO FAITH
WE ARE CONTENT
TO ACCEPT AN
ELEMENTARY GRASP
OF THE PRINCIPLES

put an end to childish ways.”

So wrote Paul in his first letter to the fledgling church in Corinth, an ancient Greek city about 80 km southwest of Athens.

The context of his observation is as important as the quotation. Paul is gently correcting a church community that had already begun to fissure over leaders (Peter, Paul, Apollos, Jesus) and the ranking of spiritual gifts.

Paul notes that all gifts are needed in the community for the common good and that the leaders all have a common goal: “We are God’s servants, working together.”

His point is that what are perceived as divisions on the ground fit together when you take a higher, more thoughtful view. Faith and its working out in the world has always been complex.

It is even more complex for

21st-century Christians who have accumulated two millennia of culture and prejudice between us and Jesus’ time. And our only stories about his life remain those coloured by the various communities who passed them on.

Partly as a result of this, Christians are still divided over which books exactly are authoritative for the faith. This is the subject of James Thomson’s Theology 101 article this month.

Theology 101, now in its third year, is one of the ways we hope will help people develop a deeper understanding of their faith. We are creating more website resources too and will be telling you about them as they are posted.

One of the most interesting ways to begin a deeper exploration of scripture is actually to try to sweep aside the accumulated clutter of our culture and imagine what it might have been like in Roman-occupied Palestine at the time Jesus was born.

It is this aspect of *Jesus Christ Superstar* that I find most compelling. It imagines how Jesus and his teachings might have been perceived first-hand by his friends—and himself.

Christmas will soon be upon us. We will sing about Mary and Joseph and shepherds. But what was it really like for them? How much—or little—did they grasp about who this baby would grow up to be?

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully...”

Until then, perhaps the least we can do is polish that mirror and reflect a little more deeply on our faith and ourselves. ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.10, NOVEMBER 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

CONVENER **Michael Munnik**
board@presbyterianrecord.ca

ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

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Phone: 905-833-6200, ext. 25

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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634
Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.
Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the
Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical
Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

New Subscription Pricing as of 2012. GST/HST not included.
Every Home Plan: \$22.00
Individual: \$32.00
U.S.A. and foreign: \$42.00 **Single copies:** \$3.95

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Address all correspondence and changes of address
(include label from magazine) to:

Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
Phone: (416) 441-1111; 1-800-619-7301
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Making Sense of 9/11

Re Ten Years After, September

I appreciated the article by Rev. Laurence DeWolfe which contrasts with the huge quantities of cant spilled out in the North American media around Sept. 11. The author rightly decries the wars of vengeance that followed, but what happened in response to the murderous attacks on the United States—or rather on iconic symbols of its economic and military power—was worse than vengeance. Vengeance is visited on perpetrators of crimes, but this response has been visited in large part on tens or hundreds of thousands of innocent victims in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. What is particularly sickening is that these wars have been promoted by so-called statesmen and enthusiastic hordes of their supporters, who loudly proclaim their adherence to one or another form of Christianity and cite God as their inspiration. The parallel to the Crusades of the Middle Ages is striking.

CHARLES NEILL, EDMONTON

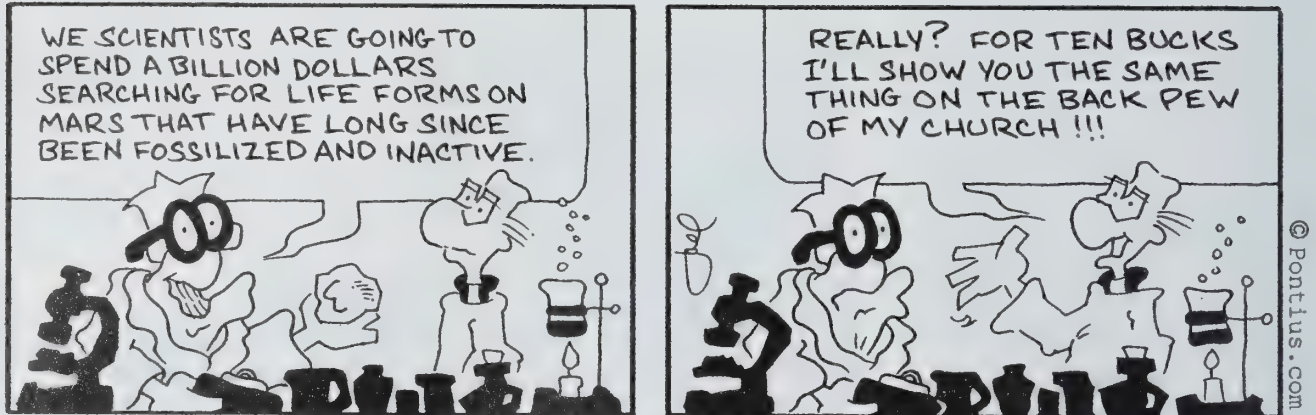
An important part of what the Presbyterian Church in Canada means to me is that it welcomes people who have questions. If it didn't, I would never have come back and stayed. It also welcomes diversity. Reaching out to other faiths was very much in evidence when St. Andrew's in downtown Toronto welcomed overflow crowds for the state funeral of Jack Layton in August. The church, some said, had not been filled like that in a generation. The service was a triumph in bringing together diversity, aboriginal Canadians, Muslims, rainbow communities and other non-mainstream groups.

To reach out to these people, we need to respect their questioning of the status quo. Recently, the *Record* has gained recognition for respecting diversity through its respected article on Islam. Abed Daggaz, in his letter published in the September issue, called it, "A truly unbiased article that does not judge one faith over the other but shows how religion can be a commonality among us all."

EMILY GAYLE AITKEN, ONLINE



Pontius' Puddle



Re After September 11, The Messy Table, Sept. 12 blog entry

As an American living in Canada I am always subject to the subtle and not-so-subtle anti-Americanism I encounter. Sept. 11 temporarily silenced that. For a time (weeks even) there was nothing but love and respect given to me by my Canadian brothers and sisters. Each year that love and care returns; if only for a few days. It is a nice feeling—solidarity.

But all the pomp is, in my mind, too high a price to pay. Remember the attack, yes, but let us keep perspective here. Don't feel too sorry for one of—if not still—the most powerful and prosperous nations on earth. Nearly 3,000 people died that day and they

deserve to be remembered. But 3,000 people died today just from malaria. Three thousand more died the day before that and 3,000 more will die tomorrow as well... and on... and on. If as a people we truly care about the lives lost on Sept. 11 then let us show it; not with a moment of silence or by watching tributes on television but by doing what we can to save the lives of others being needlessly lost each day.

REV. BRAD CHILDS, REGINA, ONLINE

The author of The Messy Table responds: You're right—there is so much ongoing loss and suffering throughout the world that it does seem strange to look back 10 years in order to mourn

and to wonder.

But I think that remembering Sept. 11 is important, because it was such a strong and sudden reminder of human brokenness. The scale of violence shocked us. That it was caused by divisions between peoples didn't.

In remembering Sept. 11, 2001, we aren't just mourning the dead—we are, I hope, mourning the human brokenness that causes this kind of human violence. And you're right—pomp gets in the way here. Because we are all implicated in human brokenness. We are not all guilty, but we are implicated.

KATIE MUNNIK, ONLINE

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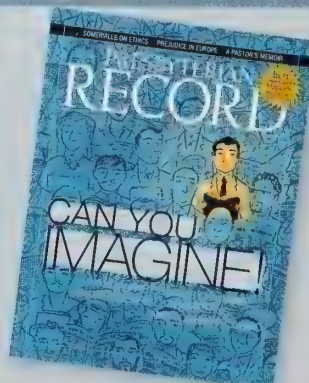
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Reason for Rebellion

Re Westminster Confession Considered, September

I need to read this book by *that* A. Clarkson, but I've been pondering this particular article over the past couple of weeks, perhaps from an historical reference. As noted, Norman Bethune was a bit of a rebel from his family. But if one reads John Moir's *Enduring Witness* (the third edition is the official history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada) the interpretation of the Westminster Confession in a Canadian context is what took the PCC in this era to the status of being Canada's largest



South Tower by Erik Slutsky, oil on canvas on wood

Protestant denomination before many (including Rev. Malcolm Nicholson Bethune the very year he died) went into Church Union (the United Church of Canada).

Likely the "China context" was a regular discussion around the Bethune dinner table as young Norman grew up in manses in places like his birthplace (Gravenhurst), Beaverton, and Blackheath, for starters. The elder Bethune, a descendant of the first Presbyterian minister in Montreal and later in Glengarry Counties, was a first-year theology student at Knox College when he and his peers raised funds to send a graduating newlywed student Jonathan (and wife Rosalind) Goforth to Honan (modern day Henan Province in China). And a year later they sent their linguistic tutor, Donald MacGillivray to Shanghai.

Whether there was personal

correspondence, or just news and reviews coming from journals such as the *Presbyterian Record*, these people and places were more than mere names in this household. The theological conviction at this time was more on evangelism at home and abroad ... Whether he fully agreed with the pietistic outlook in late 19th century manses, or whether there were larger issues as a "rebellious preacher's kid" who perhaps saw tensions between the minister and congregation, minister and presbytery, etc., there could be many other suggestions for his rebellion than just the

Westminster Confession, the Shorter Catechism, etc.

AL CLARKSON,

SITE LIASON FOR THE NATIONAL
PRESBYTERIAN MUSEUM, TORONTO, ONLINE ■

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A Web of Intimacies

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIPS. BY ANDREW FAIZ

Imagine doing hospitality, pastoral care, community-building, worship, Bible study, hymn singing, teaching, theology, spirituality, learning, questioning, sharing, amongst much else, all at the same time. Not as separate activities but at the same time.

This is what happens in a house church—literally church in your home. That's how church began, a long time ago, with people meeting in each other's homes. That's how church was here in Canada—we know the legends of pioneers meeting in living rooms and barns, without a pastor or a preacher each time, sharing the gospel, praying together, for and with each other.

Out of these meetings the thing we today call "Church" grew—rituals, liturgies, sacred spaces, divisions of labour, titles, hierarchies. But before all that, there was only the two or more gathered in His name. They read scripture. They shared the story; they discussed it. They brought that story into their own lives by sharing their own story—scripture and personal biography intersecting.

I witnessed this earlier this year when I visited the Cariboo House Church Ministries in and around Lac La Hache in B.C., where Rev. David Webber lives. We were in the home of a man who had just had an operation. Sitting across from him was his sharp-as-a-tack 90-something mom. To his left, a young man who lived nearby with his severely alcoholic father. I had travelled there with a couple who had told me in the car they had first thought it a strange way to do church. I met them again the next day at another worship. It might have been strange but they took to it.

And it was strange; because it was



very intimate. Sitting in a circle in a home, you cannot protect your vulnerability. There is no other or stranger in that room—that was blatantly obvious to me as I listened to them talking and joking with each other before worship

WITHIN A FEW
YEARS THERE WERE
HUNDREDS, THEN
THOUSANDS, OF
SOUTH ASIAN
CHRISTIANS
BUILDING A FAITH
LIFE IN THEIR CHOSEN
COUNTRY

began. Their lives seemed to intersect each day. Transporting mom, or doing some grocery errands for another. Small details which speak of community, of extended family, of love.

We sang hymns, some familiar to me, others not. I chose *How Great Thou Art*, and I was transported back 40 years to our apartment shortly after we arrived

in Canada. There was no Urdu worship then for our little band of immigrants, so we made our own. Within a few years there were hundreds, then thousands, of South Asian Christians building a faith life in their chosen country.

Something like the very early church; how it grew from homes, and evolved into Christendom. All this flashed through me as I sat in that modest living room, singing an old familiar hymn.

It was all very personal and in that deep intimacy the relationships between the people gathered—a few in Jesus' name—was a truly moving and spiritual experience. My vulnerability, as a sinner, as a believer, as a constantly failed Christian, as a deeply flawed human being, was on display. I couldn't hide in that room—so, hospitality, pastoral care, community, worship, all became one.

I have seen the future of the church and it is rooted in the past and it is the house church. Wherever church needs to be born, or reborn, in Communist Soviet nations or China or Cuba, in 19th-century Canada, the first gathering place is the living room (or the barn).

Two or three meet, then another couple join them and next thing you know there are big buildings and complicated rituals. Which are all wonderful things, but they pale in comparison to the intensity of people worshipping together in intimate spaces. After all, this faith of ours is about relationship; with each other, and with Christ and through his grace to God. It is an intricate web of intimacies. ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor. He is currently on sabbatical.



Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, stands on one of 120 combines that tried for a record-breaking soybean harvest on Sept. 5 near Listowel, Ont. This Harvest for Hunger, organized by farmers in the area, came just shy of the record with 160 acres harvested in just over 11 minutes. However, it exceeded the organizers' goal to raise \$200,000 for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank by more than \$50,000. The Presbyterian Church, through Presbyterian World Service and Development, is a member of CFGB.

Good News at PWS&D

MORE THAN \$2 MILLION GIVEN TO AGENCY'S DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. **BY AMY MACLACHLAN**

THERE IS REASON TO CELEBRATE AT THE offices of Presbyterian World Service and Development. Not only did the church's relief and development organization receive almost \$700,000 for its East Africa appeal—\$554,000 of which is eligible to be matched by CIDA—but it also recently learned that the Government of Canada will support two of its child and maternal health programs to the tune of \$1.5 million.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced in September that PWS&D, along with other Canadian agencies, would receive funding under the Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, a project endorsed by the leaders of the G-8 nations back in June 2010. They were

joined in this initiative by other nations and organizations, which together committed US\$7.3 billion in new funding over five years, with Canada committing \$1.1 billion.

PWS&D's projects are in Afghanistan and Malawi. In Afghanistan, the project will train birth attendants, improve health facilities, and benefit 19,000 women by helping to change community attitudes toward maternal health services.

In Malawi, maternal and neonatal deaths will be reduced by lowering fertility rates, increasing access to obstetric services through empowering women and communities in their referral and communications systems, and improving health-seeking behaviour. Up to 17,000 children will have access to and benefit

from improved health care services at the local level. The funding for both projects will run from 2011-2014.

PWS&D was selected from among 60 applications from across Canada.

"The committee and staff of PWS&D are pleased with the Prime Minister's Office announcement that includes PWS&D as one of 28 Canadian development organizations and agencies 'selected based on the effectiveness and sustainability of their submissions' for the Muskoka Initiative," said PWS&D director, Ken Kim. "The process was highly competitive and speaks to the ability of PWS&D and partners in Afghanistan and Malawi to carry out high quality work." ■ — with files from the Prime Minister of Canada website

Community News



Members and guests of the Nigerian mission in Toronto worshipped with Rev. Uma Onwunta, former principal clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, on Sept. 25.

First Nigerian Missionary to Canada Reports Progress

FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS AFTER THE Presbyterian Church in Canada's first missionaries began their work in Nigeria, the first missionary from the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria began his work in Canada.

Rev. Augustus Oku was born in the shadow of the PCC's first missionaries. His grandfather, Otu Etim Oku served as translator for Agnes Gollan who arrived with Joan Rochemont in 1954. Both were appointed by the Women's Missionary Society.

"You brought the gospel to us and we made it rich with African culture," said Augustus Oku. "Now we're bringing it back to you."

With the blessing of the Presbytery

of West Toronto, Oku planted a Nigerian congregation that has met at Weston, Toronto, since June 26. Their services are in English, making them accessible to non-Nigerians who may prefer an African-style worship service. To date, the services draw an average of 15-35 people each Sunday, and the fledgling congregation has an active Facebook group. The commissioning of the mission and minister is planned for Nov. 20.

Planting a congregation in Canada is different from planting one in Nigeria, Oku noted. "In Nigeria, church planting is more of a spiritual matter; less academic work is done." There, a pastor simply gathers the beginnings of a flock and starts a fellowship. Here, he said, "it is also a spiritual matter, but with a serious academic touch. I had to

do research and a survey, represent the interests of Nigerians on the project geographically, do the demography, map out the area, do a spreadsheet recording of the people I contacted. For me this is good to ascertain the viability of the missionary project. The result is what we have today."

Oku was trained at Knox College, Toronto, and said he plans to build a congregation that is engaged with the wider church.

The mission welcomed Rev. Uma Onwunta, a former principal clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, who visited on Sept. 25. Rev. Dr. Rick Fee, general secretary of the PCC's Life and Mission Agency and former missionary to Nigeria, and Arlene Onuoha, a longtime but now retired missionary to Nigeria, also attended the worship service. ■ —CW

Have a Say in the Church's Future

A COMMITTEE TASKED WITH CREATING a vision statement for the Presbyterian Church in Canada is calling for people to share their insights by completing a questionnaire by the end of November.

The five-member vision and mission committee has prepared a series of questions and are asking members and groups to "be prophetic, imaginative, creative and hopeful" in their responses. The feedback will help them craft a one-page document including a mission and a vision statement for the church.

"We expect that this document will communicate to today's church and culture using contemporary language," the committee wrote to the *Record*. "We hope that it will be widely accepted by the church and that it will be suitable for posting in every Presbyterian congregation in Canada."

The questionnaire can be filled out online at presbyterian.ca/possible, and print copies have been sent to all sessions; those without computers can request a copy from their elders and respond by mail. The questionnaire is open to individuals and church groups. All submissions are due Nov. 30.

The committee plans to contact churches and presbyteries individually as well, and expressed hope that technology would allow them to give as many people as possible an opportunity to contribute.

The vision and mission committee was created by Assembly Council in response to a recommendation endorsed at the 2011 General Assembly. It is mandated to lead a process to "discern, define and articulate a vision for the Presbyterian Church in Canada in consultation with a broad cross-section of the diversity of the larger body of the church." ■ —CW

Prominent Israeli Journalist Speaks in Canada

THE ONLY ISRAELI JOURNALIST TO HAVE LIVED in the occupied Palestinian territories was in Canada during September and October, speaking at numerous events on the prospects for peace in Israel and Palestine.

Born in Jerusalem to two concentration camp survivors, Amira Hass is the winner of many international awards and accolades, and currently writes for Israel's *Haaretz* newspaper. Her writing focuses on daily life in the West Bank and Gaza.

Hass spoke at the University of Toronto, arguing that Canadians should be involved in just peace for Israelis and Palestinians while being aware of the occupation of indigenous peoples' lands that continues throughout Canada. "You cannot be involved in ending one occupation while ignoring the other," she said.

Hass said grassroots movements in both societies, especially those led by women and young people, are a long-term sign of hope in the midst of a struggle that has little short-term prospect for a just resolution.

The tour was co-sponsored by Presbyterian-supported Kairos, and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East. Hass spent time with Kairos staff while in Toronto, wanting to learn more about indigenous peoples' rights in Canada. She participated in Kairos's blanket exercise, an exercise on the interaction between indigenous peoples in Canada and European settlers.

Hass is the author of *Drinking the Sea at Gaza: Days and Nights in a Land under Siege*, and co-author of *Reporting from Ramallah: An Israeli Journalist in an Occupied Land*. ■ —with files from Julie Graham of Kairos

World News

Scotland's Gay Marriage Discussion Stirs Controversy

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT HAS begun a 14-week public consultation, running from September to December, on the question of legalizing marriage for gay couples, and is encouraging individuals and groups such as religious organizations to take part.

Catholic church leaders have already begun to criticize the idea. Cardinal Keith O'Brien, in a homily given in Edinburgh, said, "the view of the Church is clear. No government can re-write human nature: the family and marriage existed before the state and are built on the union between a man and a woman."

Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's Deputy First Minister, said the government

"[tends] towards the view that religious ceremonies for civil partnerships should no longer be prohibited and that same-sex marriage should be introduced so that same-sex couples have the option of getting married if that is how they wish to demonstrate their commitment to one another."

"What we have here is the start of a serious church-state confrontation," said Harry Reid, a former editor of Scotland's *The Herald* and author of *The Reformation: The Dangerous Birth of the Modern World*.

"And there are divisions in the Church of Scotland following plans to ordain gay men as ministers. Whole congregations are threatening to break away later this year and form their own groups," said Reid. ■ —ENI



PC(USA) Ordains First Gay Minister

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) ordained its first openly gay minister in October in Wisconsin, three months after lifting its ban on homosexual clergy.

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Scott Anderson, 56, was ordained minister at the Covenant Presbyterian Church in front of a jubilant congregation.

"It was a big day for me and also for the Presbyterian Church," said Anderson.

Anderson, who years ago had been rejected by members of his congregation at the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Sacramento, California, left the ministry in 1990. He has been with his partner, Ian MacAllister, for 20 years. Anderson began the process of returning to the ministry five years ago. In July, the Presbyterian Church changed its constitution to allow openly gay and lesbian ministers. ■ —Reuters

Why Youth Leave Church

A FIVE-YEAR PROJECT HEADED by the Barna Group exploring the opportunities and challenges of faith development among American teens and young adults has determined six significant reasons why nearly three out of every five young Christians (59 per cent) disconnect either permanently or for an extended period of time from church life after age 15.

REASON #1: Churches seem over-protective. Young adults today express a desire for their faith to connect to the world they live in. However, one-quarter of 18- to 29-year-olds said, "Christians demonize everything outside of the church," while 22 per cent said "church [is] ignoring the problems of the real world."

REASON #2: Young peoples' experience of Christianity is shallow. One-third of teens and twentysomethings said, "church is boring," one-quarter said, "faith is not relevant to my career or interests," and one-fifth said, "God seems missing from my experience of church."

REASON #3: Churches come across as antagonistic to science. The most common of the perceptions in this arena is "Christians are too confident they know all the answers" (35 per cent), while three out of 10 young adults feel that "churches are out of step with the

scientific world we live in."

REASON #4: Young Christians' church experiences related to sexuality are often simplistic and judgmental. One of the significant tensions for many young believers is how to live up to the church's expectations of chastity and sexual purity in this culture. Research indicates that most young Christians are as sexually active as their non-Christian peers, even though they are more conservative in their attitudes about sexuality.

REASON #5: They wrestle with the exclusive nature of Christianity. Today's youth and young adults are the most eclectic generation in American history in terms of race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, technological tools and sources of authority. Most young adults want to find areas of common ground with each other. Three out of 10 young Christians (29 per cent) said "churches are afraid of the beliefs of other faiths."

REASON #6: The church feels unfriendly to those who doubt. Young adults with Christian experience say the church is not a place that allows them to express doubts. Some of the perceptions in this regard include not being able "to ask my most pressing life questions in church" and having "significant intellectual doubts about my faith."

David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, a research firm that focuses on church and Christianity, explained that "... most churches work best for 'traditional' young adults—those whose life journeys and life questions are normal and conventional. But most young adults no longer follow the typical path of leaving home, getting an education, finding a job, getting married and having kids—all before the age of 30.

"Consequently, churches are not prepared to handle the 'new normal.' ... The world for young adults is changing in significant ways, such as their access to the world and worldviews via technology, their alienation from various institutions, and their skepticism toward external sources of authority, including Christianity and the Bible." ■ —Barna Group

All in His Name

BEAUTY, BLOGGING AND BIZARRE PRAYER. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

ART

Throughout history, so-called sacred art has garnered great respect. Who can forget da Vinci's Last Supper or Michelangelo's statue of David? Unfortunately, Christian art became tacky and embarrassing, synonymous with velvet paintings of Jesus standing with Elvis or an overly muscular version of our Lord, draped in an American flag. It seems now, by the grace of God, things are changing. Makoto Fujimura is a popular speaker, writer and artist. He is also a Christian and proves that faith and good art belong together. He was commissioned to illustrate the four gospels (the first time in over 400 years this has been done by a single artist). The project is an ESV Bible celebrating the 400th anniversary of the King James Version. Fujimura generally uses an ancient Japanese technique of painting; the results are strikingly beautiful. But the Bibles are a bit costly: the leather-over-board version regularly sells for around \$350 while cloth versions are usually \$130.

FIND IT @ makotofujimura.com

BOOK

Religion Saves: And Nine Other Misconceptions by Mark Driscoll. Mark Driscoll is founder and preaching pastor at the Seattle, Washington, mega-church, Mars Hill. He is a frequent radio and television guest often seen on CNN. He is sometimes called a Missional-Calvinist and can be blunt, crude, sarcastic, divisive, arrogant and unrelenting. In short ... I like him. That's not to say I agree with him all the time. His writing is intriguingly overly simplistic, and offers easy answers to complex and difficult questions. Still, somehow, it's worth a read.

FIND IT @ amazon.ca

CHURCH

St. Thomas the Doubter church in Dallas, Texas, meets at the Embassy Suites. It's an eclectic church that uses both the Book of Common Prayer and folk-grass music and is constantly changing. The idea of the church is simple: Christians have doubts. We should acknowledge them and together seek to work through them. But that's not what makes it unique. What's unique is that the church's website isn't really a website. It's basically just a clever blog. That's what makes it great. You find their church by accident. You stumble upon it. You read it, you laugh at the funny cartoons and illustrations, you listen to the beautiful refrains and then it hits you. This is a church ... where is it? And they've got you. If I lived within a couple hours, I'd check it out.

FIND IT @ thomasthedoubter.com

VIDEO CLIP

Pastor Joe Nelms of Family Baptist Church in Lebanon, Tennessee, made headlines this summer for a rather unorthodox public prayer. Although he had three times previously been asked to do the prayer of invocation for different NASCAR racing events, this one will surely be remembered. Saying that the prayer was really intended to reach out to a non-Christian audience and boasting many visitors to his church following the event, Nelms has nevertheless gained some new critics. It's not that hard to see why. The prayer comes off more like an advertising plug as Nelms thanks God for "GM performance parts" and "my smokin' hot wife."

FIND IT @ youtube.com Search for "Joe Nelms NASCAR prayer." ■

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

Bridges to Hope

OFFERING A HAND-UP TO THOSE IN NEED IN ST. JOHN'S. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

"Being food coordinator for Bridges To Hope for three and a half years was the most rewarding, challenging, and wonderful job I ever had," said Jennifer Whitfield, an elder at St. Andrew's in St. John's, Nfld., and president of the Atlantic Mission Society. "Seeing the face of God in all the individuals who came in for food was such an amazing service for our church and our Lord."

Bridges To Hope is a joint outreach project of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the United Church of Canada. In St. John's, 12 churches, 10 United and two Presbyterian, support the program. A volunteer board of directors is comprised of church and community representatives.

As an elder at St. Andrew's (St. David's in St. John's is the other Presbyterian congregation that supports the centre) Whitfield is a tireless supporter of BTH and continues to promote their needs to the congregation.

And there are stories of individuals

The food pantry operates four days a week, where 24 volunteers help organize and distribute weekly food hampers to people in need. An average of 600 people receive hampers each month. Emergency food hampers are also offered, helping people through 24 hours of need

she met while working there that have stayed with her.

"Tom" was on social assistance, and was a BTH regular. "Forty-ish, fun and healthy" according to Whitfield, she asked Tom if he'd like to find a job. She helped him with his resume, and off he went to distribute it. He returned soon after, saying he had two

job offers, but he needed a doctor's note to confirm that his back was healthy enough to do physical labour. The doctor, however, declined a note. Tom explained to Whitfield that he was hit by a drunk driver in a hit-and-run accident 15 years ago and his back had been seriously injured.

He received a mere \$1,100 compensation (once the driver was found, after also hitting a young boy). Whitfield knew that more could be done, and found Tom a lawyer. More than a decade after the accident, a judge dealt with the driver harshly and ordered that Tom receive \$1,100 every month for many years—retroactive to the time of the accident.

"I then accompanied Tom to a financial planner!" said Whitfield with delight. "Tom has moved, and no longer goes to Bridges To Hope, but I still see him sometimes. He always greets me with a hug and thanks me and Bridges To Hope for his new life."

"Josaphine" was on social assistance for many years and came often to BTH. Whitfield recalls the day she gave Josaphine a cantaloupe—something she had never had before. She thanked Whitfield and went away with her new possession. Later that day, Josaphine popped by again, asking for another "fruit thing that looks like a football."

"She'd gone home, eaten the whole thing, and come right back for another!" laughed Jennifer. "Being Friday, I happily gave her another cantaloupe to enjoy. As Josaphine headed out the door, she turned to say, 'You are all very nice to me and I like it.' The smile on her beautiful face brought tears to my eyes."

Then there was "Agatha"—a well-dressed, well-spoken woman who wept in Whitfield's office as she related her story. Her husband was very sick, and while he owned his own business, he could no longer work and there was no income and no food.

"Agatha had never dreamed she would ever have to come to a food aid centre and ask for food," said Whitfield.



Chef Andrew Butler teaches people about cooking, nutrition, and sharing in the community kitchen at Bridges To Hope.

So the food pantry volunteers along with Whitfield put together a hamper for Agatha and her husband. She always came during closing time on Fridays, hoping to keep her story as quiet as possible.

"We tried to give her hope as we showed our love and caring for her."

Tom, Josaphine and Agatha—and hundreds more like them—are grateful for the centre's numerous services. The food pantry operates four days a week, where 24 volunteers help organize and distribute weekly food hampers to people in need. An average of 600 people receive hampers each month. Emergency food hampers are also offered, helping people through 24 hours of need. Christmas hampers are also distributed. In 2010, a community kitchen was completed, offering communal meal preparation as well as nutrition and cooking classes.

Every September, a drive is organized for new backpacks filled with school supplies for children in need. In 2010, there were more than 360 bags distributed to children in kindergarten to grade 12.

A toy lending library operates in partnership with a local children and parents centre. Children are able to borrow toys, and then return them for others to use.

When needed, clients are referred to a variety of community agencies to help them break the cycle of poverty.

"The BTH program is one of true hope to help alleviate poverty in our community," said Karen Moores, who is on the board of directors and an elder at St. Andrew's, St. John's. "It is for anyone who needs a helping hand. It is a centre which respects the innate dignity and worth of people and strives to make the world better for them." ■

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer.



Through *Presbyterians Sharing* we are partners in mission with churches around the world. Through grants we support evangelism and outreach programs and theological training of ministers. Long-term mission personnel and short-term visitors support and encourage partners in their ministry. Partners come to Canada for educational opportunities and to share in General Assembly and Canada Youth. We are stronger in mission because we work together!

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Letter from the Presbytery of Hamilton

Emmaus Project Creates Energy and Excitement

ONE GATHERING SPARKS A DESIRE TO DO AND BE MORE. BY **CHERIE INKSETTER**

"WERE NOT OUR HEARTS BURNING within us?" (Luke 24:32) How many of our congregations have asked themselves that question? This was the burning question (pun intended) that was put to the group at the Emmaus Project in May 2010. The national church's initiative (spurred on by the Long Range Planning Committee of Assembly Council) called together Presbyterians from across the country to voice their concerns about the future of the church and brainstorm how our dwindling denomination might shout again, "It is true! The Lord has risen" (24:34). When the conference ended, how many presbyteries and their representatives "got up and returned at once" (24:33) to share the amazing story they discovered there?

Hamilton presbytery sent five clergy and three elders who came together to explore issues of relevance and integrity, and came away energized and excited. This is not new you say, every conference does this, but there was a fundamental difference. They came back to Hamilton and "told what had happened on the way" (24:35) and were motivated to share their story. Much has happened since that weekend in May.

They shared their story at presbytery to a lukewarm response. After all, presbytery hadn't been there and "were startled and frightened, thinking they had seen a ghost" (24:37), the Ghost of PCC Past. There were clandestine meetings of the Emmaus team, as it was called, in homes and restaurants, plotting how they might keep the excitement building in the midst of the uncertainty that had confronted them.

The innocently named "Day of Discernment" brought together the

entire presbytery for a day of looking at where they had been and where they are now, in an effort to build a foundation for what we might become. Churches were clustered in small groups geographically to establish long-forgotten camaraderie. Dialogue was hesitant and stilted at first but as the morning progressed, an air of excitement was evident.

From April 1-3, the elder's team, which had previously focused on issues of elder training and networking, hosted a retreat at Crieff Hills Retreat and

**'Day of Discernment'
brought together the
entire presbytery for a
day of looking at where
they had been**

Conference Centre entitled, Open Your Eyes and Look at the Fields.

This was attended by 78 enthusiastic clergy and elders who committed to looking at next steps. The speakers were Barb and Marty Moellengraaf who talked about what Emmaus could mean to us as congregations; Harry Klassen who talked about equipping our spiritual leaders with their responsibilities in the wake of Emmaus; and Dr. John Bowen, the director of evangelism at Wycliffe College who spoke on reaching out to our local communities, what it means to share the gospel, why the very thought scares us and why it shouldn't. There was unanimous consent for more and a follow up day was planned for June.

June 15th arrived and so did 84 teaching and ruling elders to Chedoke, Hamilton. Surprisingly there were more participants who had not attended the retreat at Crieff but had heard about it and wanted to be part of it. Group discussions were lively and the resounding questions were not, "How can we keep our churches open?" but, "How can we reach our communities with the gospel message in a relevant way?"

The presbytery has since instituted a Futures Visioning Task Force to explore the future of churches within its bounds. Conversations between clusters of churches, along with leadership from the Task Force have begun, focusing on fresh ideas on how to share ministry. Instead of a sense of competition there is a welcome breath of cooperation. One of our churches has opened its doors as the new home to Almanarah Presbyterian Church for this region.

Future events have been planned which include a one-day workshop in November with Rev. Beth Fellingner on Mission-Shaped Ministry; a day of celebration to share what is being done in the wake of the Emmaus Project with our moderator, Rev. Dr. Rick Horst in February 2012; and a two-day conference featuring Diana Butler Bass in 2012.

Presbytery meetings have a whole new feel, one of shared expectations and excitement. There is an energizing sense that we are on the brink of something that will help us fulfill our mandate to "Go and make disciples of all nations." And it is a very good feeling, indeed! ■

Cherie Inksetter is an elder at St. Paul's, Carluke, Ont., and is finishing the MDiv program at Knox College, Toronto.

Features

Theology 101

OUR FEATURE ON THE SOLAS

The 16th-century reformers—Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox and others—were derisively nicknamed, “the Sola-ists.” They distilled the essence of the gospel in five Latin slogans using the word *sola*, meaning only, solely or exclusively: *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *sola scriptura*, *solo Christo*, *solī Deo gloria* (grace alone, faith alone, scripture alone, Christ alone, to God’s glory alone).

Today the *solas* of early Protestantism run up against other realities and claims: What does it mean to say “Christ alone” in a multi-religious world? How does scripture alone square with contemporary thought about biblical interpretation? And so on. So, are we still sola-ists today?

Sola Scriptura

TRIED AND TRUE—OR PROBLEMATIC? BY JAMES THOMSON

Scripture alone—this has been one of the ringing proclamations upon which the Protestant world has built the basis of its understanding of the Christian faith. The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments recognized by Protestants have been understood to be the rule of faith and life—not church councils or ancient creeds, not pronouncements of bishops or conclaves. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Bible is to be interpreted by reference to itself. It is the witness of the whole canon and not bits and pieces chosen at random that opens to us our understanding of God.

Historically, Protestants have understood the revelation of God in Christ to be the high point of that revelatory stream and thus the New Testament becomes a kind of linchpin in determining the sense of the rest of the scriptures. Unfortunately, this is where problems arise. If the Holy Spirit guides those who seek after God through the scriptures, why is it that there are approximately 30,000 denominations of Protestants in the United States alone, all maintaining that their interpretations of scripture are correct, and many differing so widely from each other that a visitor from outer space would wonder whose scriptures they were talking about? From ►

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One way or another, these are the books that frame our faith

the wildest fundamentalists to the most extreme radical textual critic, the understandings and positions they take are so dissimilar that one is required to ask: "Whose scriptures are we talking about?"

When Luther and other Reformers demanded that the Bible be made available to the laity in their own language, they firmly believed that these inspired scriptures, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of Reformed theologians, would break Christians free from the authority of the medieval church with its suspect practices, such as the use of indulgences for the remission of sins. It wasn't long before even these leaders of reform began attacking other Christians, such as the Anabaptists, on the basis of what Luther and Calvin determined were wrong interpretations of scripture. This understanding of how we are to interpret scripture has always been the Sword of Damocles hanging over the head of the concept *sola scriptura*. For what might be termed orthodox Protestants, *sola scriptura* has never been understood to mean that any single Christian's interpretation of scripture is as good as any other's. As our own *Living Faith* puts it: "Both Old and New Testaments were written within communities of faith and accepted as scripture by them. Those who seek to understand the Bible need to stand within the church and listen to its teaching." (*Living Faith*, 5.3)

Which raises another point. In the first four centuries of the church's life, there was not just one community of faith. There were numbers of them and they did not all agree on what constituted "scripture." By the time of the Reformation, Protestants accepted the Old Testament that had been canonized by Jewish scholars in the second century CE. Thus today

there are three main canons of the Old Testament: the 39 books of the Jewish Tanakh and Protestant churches, the 46 accepted by Roman Catholics and the 51 accepted by most Orthodox churches. (And Anglicans sit on the fence between the Protestants and Roman Catholics.) Consequently, if it is *sola scriptura*, whose *scriptura* are we talking about?

There is a school of theological thought that runs under the name of the Jesus Seminar whose members attempt to discover the "historical Jesus" hidden, as they maintain, beneath the words of the four gospels. They seek to determine which parts of the gospels are the original stories and which are accretions of later church theology. Consequently, they depart from the general approach to New Testament interpretation by weeding out segments they claim are not historically accurate to Jesus' time. (Similar questions were asked in the first centuries of the church's existence.)

It really is a bit of a muddle to the average Christian. However, one needs to recognize that even those who want to take a radical view of Christianity are forced to deal with these canonical books. We may differ in our understandings about what the Christian faith is all about in reference to our understanding of God, of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but no matter what we believe we are forced to recognize that, like it or not, it is the 66 books that compose our Bible that have to be dealt with. We may argue about interpretation. Some may even want to dismember some of them (even Luther wanted to get rid of the Epistle of James) but one way or another, these are the books that frame our faith. ■

Rev. Dr. James T. Thomson is minister emeritus of Knox, Bracebridge, Ont.



Savaoph, God the Father, by artist Viktor Vasnetsov (1885-1926)

The Trouble with God

GOD'S NOT PREDICTABLE. BUT GOD IS GOOD. **BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE**

Nov. 27, 2011
First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9 / Mark 13:24-37

Here's the trouble with God: Just when we think we know what God's going to do, God does something else. Or, as it often seems, nothing at all.

When we think we know what God is like, God shows us another personality. When we want God to be

a kindly old father, God turns out to be an avenging judge. When we want God to pass judgment and set things right, God becomes a mother hen gathering her chicks, good and bad, under her wings.

Even when God's prophets lay it out as it's going to be. God reserves the right to do the opposite of what the prophets believe God told them. The trouble with God is, we just can't pin God down.

Left with the mystery, we search for signs God is present and active somewhere. We might even pray,

"O that you would tear open

the heavens and come down, so the mountains would quake at your presence ..." (Isaiah 64:1)

We used to be taught the classics of the western world in school. Now, most of us meet Hercules in cheesy TV series like, *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*.

At the beginning of each episode, the narrator spoke of the "days when the gods were petty and cruel." Humanity needed someone to protect the innocent from the games the gods played. Hercules was the go-between who defeated the monsters of divine vengeance. ➤

Sometimes we see Jesus as a Hercules, half-god and half-mortal

Our God isn't like the gods of the Greek myths. But sometimes we think and act as if God is like Hercules' unpredictable father, Zeus. Or his jealous stepmother, Hera.

Sometimes we see Jesus as a Hercules, half-god and half-mortal. Working miracles to save people from cruel fate. Fate God must have ordained.

We read words like our gospel today. We get a picture of Jesus, riding in on a cloud, like Hercules on TV. Coming to rescue us from disaster.

When the Bible raises the image of an intervening God, it's always clear

the people who want God to intervene are in for it, too!

When we believe in an intervening God what we really believe in is a God who steps in to set them straight. We try hard to make this God choose what we think is right.

If we call on God to come down and fix the mess the world is in, we'd better be quick to add what Isaiah prayed,

*"Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand ...
Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people."
(Isaiah 64:8-9)*

Don't be too hard on us, God. We know we're sinners, too.

When we pray mercy for ourselves we have to ask it for others, too. God will give it anyway. That's the trouble

with God. God loves the people we don't, just as much as God loves us.

When God acts to save, there's enough love to save everyone.

Surely in Advent we can remember God has already intervened for the judgment and salvation of the world. God intervened, decisively, in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. God is with us!

In C. S. Lewis' classic, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, a girl nervously awaits the advent of Aslan the lion, the Christ-figure of the tale. She asks Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, "Is he safe?"

Mr. Beaver answers, "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good."

That's the trouble with our unpredictable God. God's not safe, but God is good. ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.

This Christmas, share the story of Jesus.

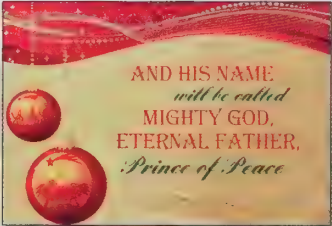
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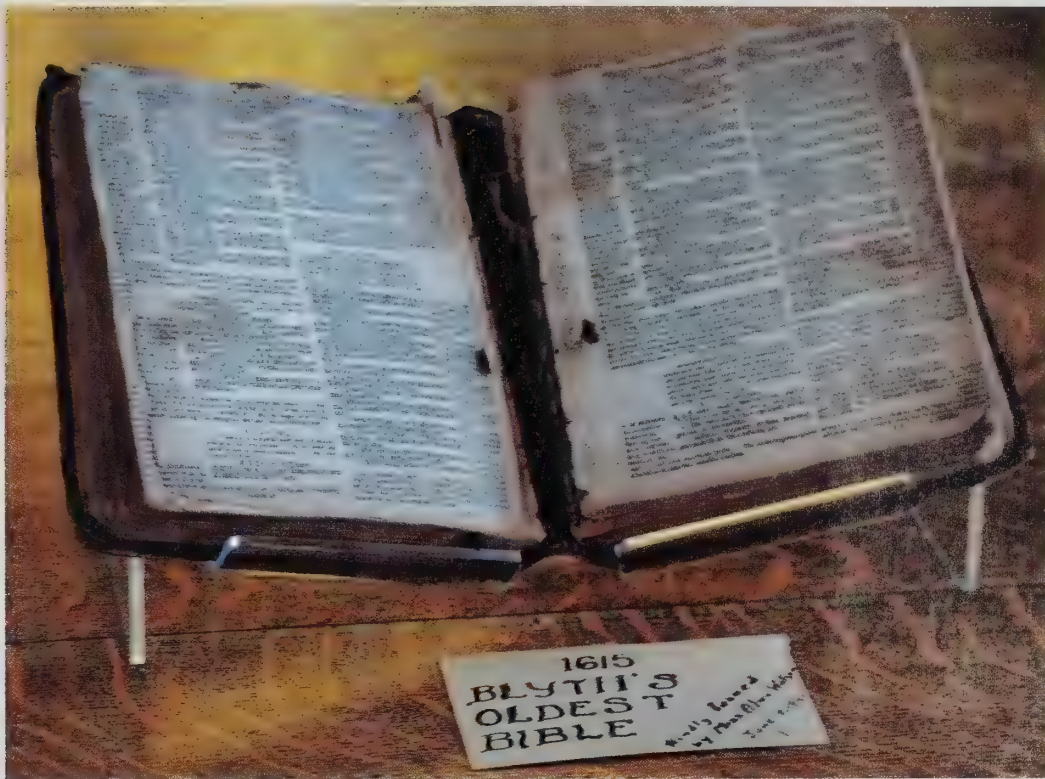
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More Than a Cultural Icon

400 YEARS AFTER ITS DEFINING ENGLISH TRANSLATION, THE BIBLE STILL SPARKS INTEREST.

BY PETER BUSH

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the publication of the English King James Bible, the popular name of what is formally known as the Authorized Version. Its popular acronym is a combination of the two names, KJV, for King James Version.

The translation takes its popular name from James I, who commissioned a new English translation in 1604. It was finished in 1611.

Resting heavily on William Tyndale's translation, the KJV was the dominant English version of the Bible for

more than three centuries. Conferences marking the anniversary by exploring the history of the KJV and its literary and cultural impact have been held on university campuses around the world. Mark Noll, professor of church history at Notre Dame, notes words as diverse as "adoption," "beautiful," and "mortgaged" all became fixed in English because of the KJV. Even the atheist Christopher Hitchens, writing in *Vanity Fair*, acknowledged its impact: "The Tyndale/King James translation, even if all its copies were to be burned, would still live on in our language through its transmission by way of Shakespeare and Milton and Bunyan and ➤



An event celebrating the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible was held at Knox College, Toronto, last spring. Knox's director of development Lisa Watson (back) and a visitor thumb through a 1615 version that was loaned to the college for the event.

Coleridge, and also by way of beloved popular idioms such as 'fatted calf' and 'pearls before swine.'

In its heyday, the KJV was not the only English translation, but no preacher needed to say to their congregation "I am reading from the KJV this morning;" everyone knew. Since the introduction of the Revised Standard Version in 1946 (New Testament) and 1952 (Old Testament) a flood of new translations have appeared. An estimated 900 translations of the Bible in whole or in part exist in English, and there are a variety of forms in which they are published: as magazines aimed at a teenage market; with additional resources targeting men or women or sports fans or those in recovery; and as

an App for smartphones.

Behind the academic conferences and plethora of references to "high culture," behind the extraordinary range of English translations and ways they are packaged to reach new readers runs the question: Is the Bible a factor in the English-speaking world today? And even more narrowly, is the Bible a guide for English-speaking North Americans today?

Television personality Steven Colbert mounted a debate during the Jan. 4, 2011 episode of the *Colbert Report* between U.S. Congressman Ron Paul, arguing in favour of using the gold standard to peg the value of the American dollar, and David Leonhardt, reporter with *The New York*

Times, contending the dollar should be allowed to float. As the debate ended, Colbert asked, "Which would you rather worship: a golden calf or a calf made of \$100 bills?" Both debaters looked embarrassed and the audience laughed, getting the joke.

Biblical figures appear regularly in popular culture. Noah, described by filmmaker Darren Aronofsky as "the first environmentalist," appears in Bill Cosby's sketch "Noah: Right!" and movies like Disney's *Noah*, starring Tony Danza, or *Evan Almighty* with Steve Carell. The *Veggie Tales*' version of Jonah, which played in theatres across North America, gave children and teenagers new lines to quote—some of which were even biblical.

The Rolling Stones' song about the prodigal son (on the 1968 *Beggars Banquet* album) tells the story almost exactly as it appears in the gospel of Luke. The punk rock band Bad Religion's *Prodigal Son* (on their 2007 *New Maps of Hell* release) shows remarkable insight into the challenges faced by the older brother. Bad Religion's lyrics do not re-tell the story; they assume the audience knows it well enough to understand their song.

These pop culture references indicate that, despite surveys showing biblical literacy slipping (for example, half of North Americans cannot name the first book of the Bible), there is enough residual knowledge of the Bible so that those who speak to and for large sections of the culture, such as TV personalities, moviemakers, and rock bands, can make biblical references and expect to be understood.

The deeper question is, do people who know about the Bible also recognize it as a guide in their lives? The question defies a simple answer. In surveys between 2007 and 2009, the Barna polling group asked adults in the United States their views of the Bible. Asked to name a holy or sacred book, 90 per cent of those over 64 named the Bible. This contrasts with the two-thirds of respondents between

In its heyday, the KJV was not the only English translation of the Bible, but no preacher needed to say to their congregation “I am reading from the KJV this morning;” everyone knew

ages 18 and 25 who identified the Bible in this way. This evidence could be presented in support of an argument that the Bible has less authority for the younger group, pointing to an ongoing decline in the Bible's impact on people's lives.

But before reaching that conclusion, one more set of survey results needs to be considered. The survey asked: “What specific aspect of your spiritual life would you like to improve?” Eight percent of those over the age of 64 who had identified themselves as Christians wished to increase their Bible knowledge; none

wanted to read the Bible more. Strikingly, 19 per cent of those between the ages of 18 and 25 identifying themselves as Christians said they wanted to increase their Bible knowledge, and three per cent wanted to read the Bible more. Apparently there is a desire to know more about what Karl Barth called “the strange world of the Bible.”

Last April, I sat in a room packed with more than 100 teenagers. Every chair was filled, kids were sitting on the counter at the back, and the speaker was stuck in a corner because more young people were sitting on the floor at the front of the room. The

topic drawing this crowd: “Five ways to study the Bible.”

Certainly no English translation of the Bible will dominate the church and cultural scene the way the King James Version did. And even though biblical literacy appears to be on the decline in some quarters, it would be a mistake to assume the Bible is irrelevant to people today. A new generation appears interested in the Bible not just as a source of cultural references, but as a book to be read and studied. ■

Rev. Peter Bush is minister at Westwood, Winnipeg.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



© Photo credit: Karen Mackay

Jamie Lynn Fawcett, Colin Mackay and Jacqueline Gilchrist exchange high fives with a group of children while on a short-term mission experience with PCC partners in the Livingstonia Synod, Malawi. Gifts to the Mission Connections Fund, one of The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Mission Priority Funds, facilitate such exchanges between congregations and mission partners, transforming the lives of both and growing the mission of the church now and into the future.



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Faithfully Serving

Updates from the Life & Mission Agency

www.presbyterian.ca/lma

November 2011

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Advent Resources

The Advent season is just weeks away. The Life and Mission Agency maintains a special page on the website that contains all Advent-related resources including worship planners, calendars, readings and more.

Visit presbyterian.ca/advent to access these resources.

Equipping For...

The quarterly PCPak, containing valuable resources and information, has been mailed to each congregation.

In addition to the mailing, all of the EquippingFor articles have been posted online at www.equippingfor.ca.

At the website, you can also subscribe to email updates for each of the five categories so that you never miss out!

New Associate Secretary

Due to the retirement of The Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace in June 2012, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, through the Life and Mission Agency, is inviting applications for the executive position of Associate Secretary, International Ministries at the national office in Toronto.

The Associate Secretary will coordinate and administer the work of international ministries, including, in consultation with our overseas partners, the appointment of overseas staff and volunteers.

A full position description can be found online:

presbyterian.ca/download/6465

LMA Committee

The Life and Mission Agency Committee meets this month at Crieff Hills Community. The Committee, made up of elders and clergy from across the country, sets priorities and provides oversight for the work of the Life and Mission Agency.

Mission Blogs

Each of our overseas mission staff now have a blog where you can follow along as they work to proclaim Christ as representatives of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

presbyterian.ca/missionstaff

2012 Calendar

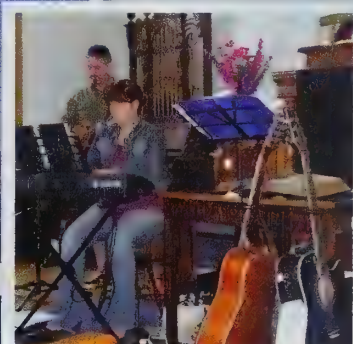
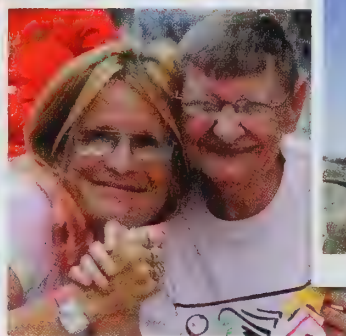
The 2012 wall calendar is now available for order from the Bookroom. The theme for 2012 is "Go. Learn. Serve." highlighting just some of the many mission trips and experiences available to Presbyterians.

presbyterian.ca/calendar

Canada Youth 2012

The PCC's national youth conference takes place at Brock University from July 3-8, 2012.

Registration is now open. Visit the website for details about the event and registration information.
canadayouth.ca



www.flickr.com/pccconnect



Have You Read *the Entire Bible?*

A CONGREGATION'S GUIDE FOR MAKING IT THROUGH. **BY NICOLE REID**

Should you read the Bible?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada states: "Yes. The regular reading and study of scripture, together with the hearing of the word in public worship, are some of the richest joys of Christian commitment" (*A Catechism for Today*, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2006).

That being the case, Knox in Dunnville, Ont., decided to focus some time on scripture. We began on the first Sunday of Advent in 2009 and ended a year later with a potluck lunch, when accomplishments were celebrated.

Organizing a congregational Year of the Bible is not difficult. Create a list of options to present to your ►

congregation. Make the list long and varied, keeping in mind people of all age groups, all levels of commitment, and all levels of reading ability. The purpose is to give the Bible a higher profile for the year. Options include:

- Read the entire Bible
- Read the New Testament
- Read the Old Testament
- Attend a Bible study during Advent
- Use a daily Bible reading guide, such as *These Days* from the WMS Book Room, or another daily devotional reading
- Attend a Bible study during Lent
- Read a commentary on one book of the Bible
- Watch *Walking the Bible* DVD
- Read the book *Walking the Bible*
- Pray for the participants
- Memorize Bible verses
- Attend an adult Bible study
- Opening Doors to Discipleship—an online Bible course, available at openingdoorstodiscipleship.com.
- Participate in a 12-month Book of the Bible Club for informal, group Bible study
- Read a Bible storybook (or have it read to you)
- Do a Bible survey as found in the *Life Application Study Bible*

- Read materials from the church library relevant to the Bible
- Listen to an audio Bible

The Year of the Bible committee should present the idea with this accompanying list to session for approval, including a time frame of one year, beginning at a suitable time. One possibility is to begin as we did, at the beginning of the church year with Advent, and finish at the end of the church year, one year later. This allows promotion time in the fall, when people are returning to a more routine way of life. In early October, present the concept to the congregation from the pulpit during the sermon time. The sermon can include important reasons for reading the Bible, as well as explanations of the various options. Encourage participants to spend some money, such as buying a newer translation or some related material as this can make the whole experience seem more valuable. Also in October, roughly two months prior to the beginning of the year, collect pledges—have people sign up for options they think they might want to participate in. Fellowship time after the church

service can be an opportune time for signing pledges. Have everyone sign two identical pledge sheets, one for the organizing committee, the other one to take home. Since some of the options such as the monthly book club and Bible studies require some preparatory work and organizing, the committee needs to be aware of people's interests. Also, this lead time provides an opportunity for the congregation to ask questions. Include pledge cards in the Sunday morning bulletin for a few weeks. Bible reading plans are readily available on the internet, in the back pages of some study Bibles, on electronic Bible programs, and there are also Bibles available that are set up with one-year reading plans. It takes a reader of average skill level 20-30 minutes every day of the year to read through the entire Bible.

Once you begin the Year of the Bible, it is important to follow up with participants on a regular basis. An informal survey done during a worship service might help clear up any confusion, as well as encourage others who might have similar questions. This is also a good time to remind people that even with the best intentions, we fall behind on our commitments, and that it is never too late to restart or get back on track. It is good to have session members talk to their families of faith (elder districts) on a more individual level. Remind the congregation of The Year of the Bible regularly during the year to maintain its high profile, and to encourage perseverance.

Celebrate all of the accomplishments at the end of the year! A potluck lunch on the last day of the church calendar year is one option. Welcome everybody, whether they participated or not. Encourage some of the people who read the entire Bible to share their experiences. Celebrate the accomplishments of all. ■

CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF ADVENT AT KNOX COLLEGE

Join us on

Wednesday, December 7th, 2011
at 7:00 PM
in the Knox College Chapel,
59 St. George Street, Toronto

as we tell the story with song.

Refreshments will follow.

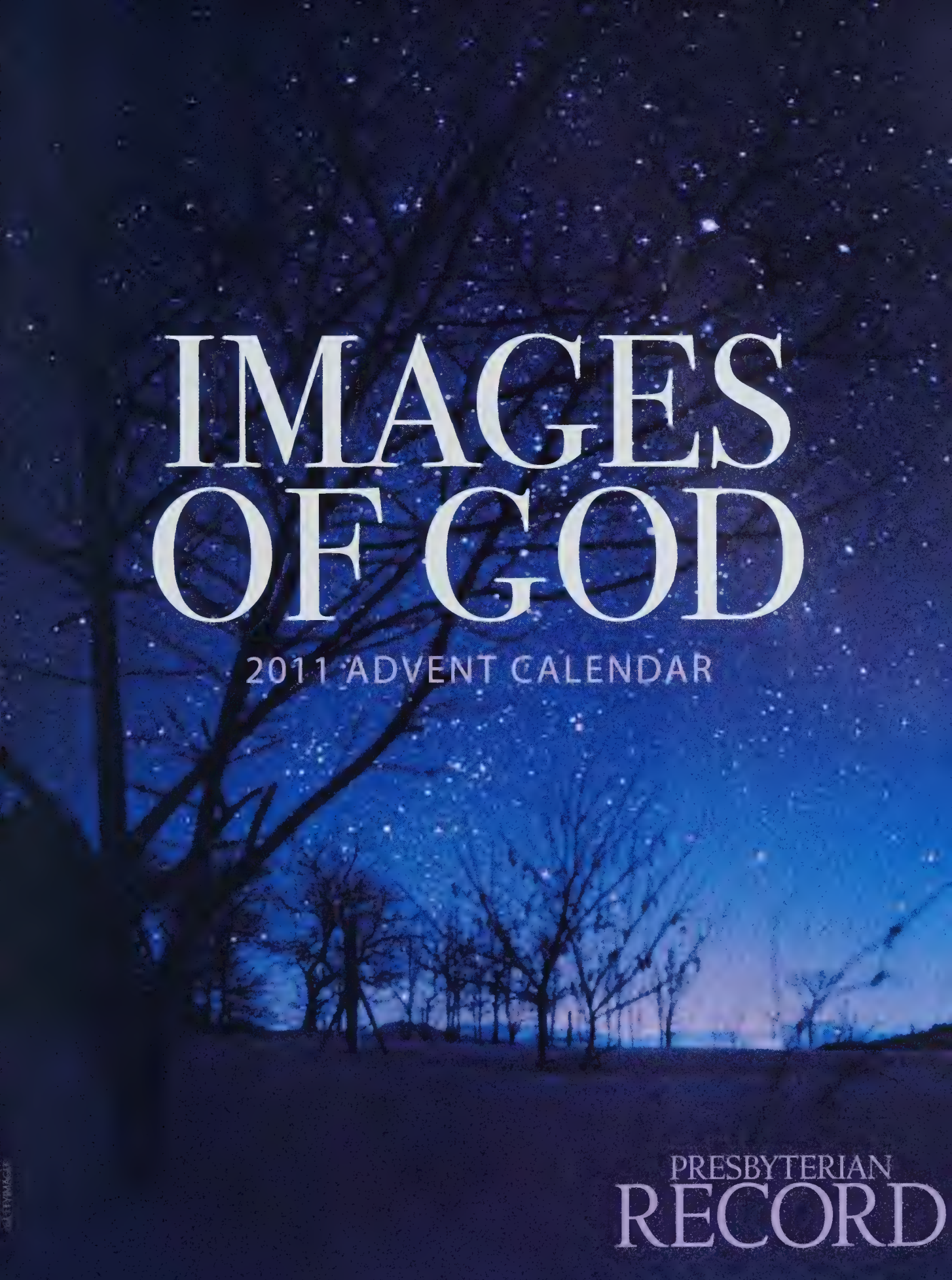


KNOX COLLEGE

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Nicole Reid is a member at Knox,
Dunnville, Ont.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a winter night. The sky is a deep, dark blue, filled with numerous small, bright white stars. In the foreground and middle ground, the dark, silhouetted branches of bare trees are visible against the starry sky. The ground appears to be covered in a layer of snow, reflecting some of the light from the sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

IMAGES OF GOD

2011 ADVENT CALENDAR

PRESBYTERIAN
RECORD

IMAGES OF GOD

2011 ADVENT CALENDAR BY L. JUNE STEVENSON

Biblical images portray God in many, sometimes very different, ways. How do you imagine God? What do you picture God to be like? Read each scripture and list the image(s) portrayed. Some scriptures have several images in them. Beside each image of God, write how people are also portrayed, for example, if God is SHEPHERD, then we are sheep. Sometimes the image(s) will portray what we should or will be, or what God will be like.

WEEK ONE	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27
1 ST SUNDAY ADVENT ISAIAH 64:1-6	
GOD IS <i>powerful</i>	
WE ARE <i>like leaves blown away!</i>	
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28	
PSALM 80:1-7	
GOD IS	

WEEK TWO	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4
2 ND SUNDAY ADVENT ISAIAH 40: 1-5	
GOD IS	
WE ARE	
MONDAY, DECEMBER 5	
ISAIAH 40:6-8	
GOD IS	

WEEK THREE	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11
3 RD SUNDAY ADVENT ISAIAH 61:1-2A	
GOD IS	
WE ARE	
MONDAY, DECEMBER 12	
ISAIAH 61:2B-4	
GOD IS	

WEEK FOUR	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18
4 TH SUNDAY ADVENT 2 SAMUEL 7:8-11, 16	
GOD IS	
WE ARE	
MONDAY, DECEMBER 19	
PSALM 89:1-4	
GOD IS	

WEEK FIVE	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25
CHRISTMAS DAY LUKE 2:8-20	
GOD IS	
WE ARE	
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26	
LUKE 2:1-7	
GOD IS	

Gifts of Change



"A gift
opens doors..."

Proverbs 18:16a

Thank you for giving a gift through The Presbyterian Church in Canada's *Gifts of Change* program. These gifts really do change lives—both here in Canada and around the world.

Each financial example shows you what your donation can achieve. No matter what you choose to support, you can be sure your funds will be used effectively and efficiently to carry out life-changing programs. It is important to note that:

- + actual costs of the examples may fluctuate depending on current and local market conditions,
- + and your gift will help our partners carry out the overall goals of the program.



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You can give a gift online at www.presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange, by calling the office with your credit card information or by sending a cheque, payable to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and marked with the appropriate code.

Thank you for your support!
Together we are changing people's lives.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto ON, M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 or 416-441-1111

This catalogue contains a sampling of the projects you can support through *Gifts of Change*.

A complete list of projects can be found online at www.presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange

Give a gift that matters!

Choose Projects:

CODE	PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
TOTAL:		_____

Personal Information:

Name: _____

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Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

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☐ **Visa** ☐ **Mastercard**

Name on card: _____

Credit card # _____ Expiry date: ____ / ____

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Gifts of Change

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301

Thank you for your generous support!

Canadian Ministries / The Vine

supports mission and outreach programs across Canada in new church development, chaplaincies and native, refugee, rural and inner-city ministries. The following projects complement the work being accomplished through your gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*.

Mak

Bring Hope to Inner City Children CM38

Help bring hope to Canada's poverty-stricken inner cities. Your gift helps provide youth with after-school programs, summer camp, tutoring, counselling, sports facilities and the opportunity to build healthy relationships and self-esteem.

\$5 buys transit tickets for a child to attend programs for one week

\$40 provides one month of healthy snacks for a child in an after-school program

\$75 provides an activities coordinator for one day

\$100 allows one child to attend summer day camp

Free Women from Violence CM35

Help women and children fleeing abusive homes find safety and support through *Armagh*. Your gift helps provide furnished apartments, legal and financial advice, job training and counseling to empower women to rebuild their lives.

\$25 subsidizes a woman or child for one day



a difference in Canada!

Welcome a Refugee CM31

Help refugees fleeing violence, conflict and poverty rebuild their lives in Canada. Your gift helps Action Réfugiés Montréal match vulnerable refugee women with volunteers, facilitate private sponsorship and support and visit people held in an immigration detention centre near Montreal.

\$40 buys one month of telephone cards for people in detention

\$50 provides one month's transportation for volunteers visiting the detention centre

\$60 trains volunteers in cross-cultural communication and the Canadian refugee claim process

\$80 provides expert staff guidance to sponsors and refugees in the private sponsorship process

Build Bridges of Healing CM24

Help PCC native ministries work to restore relationships and provide vital services to Aboriginal people in Canada. Your gift will help provide counselling, healing circles, parenting classes, after-school programs, shelter, food, clothing and other basic needs.

\$10 provides a meal for someone who is homeless

\$25 provides a basket of food for a food bank

\$50 supports counselling and parenting classes

Minister to Children CM30

Help reach out to children in the remote First Nations community of Nazko, British Columbia. Your gift will help Cariboo Presbyterian Church run weekly after-school Bible classes, a Vacation Bible School and a "Talking Circle" for teen girls.

\$25 purchases snacks and supplies for one weekly Bible class session

\$25 buys pizza and juice for the teen girls' Talking Circle

\$300 covers the cost for one week of Vacation Bible School

Give the Gift of a Smile CM34

Help some of Toronto's most marginalized people gain self-esteem. Your gift will help Evangel Hall provide free dental services to people living on the street, giving them the confidence to rebuild their lives.

\$23 buys one x-ray

\$110 extracts a tooth

\$200 provides a complete oral exam

\$500 buys a denture

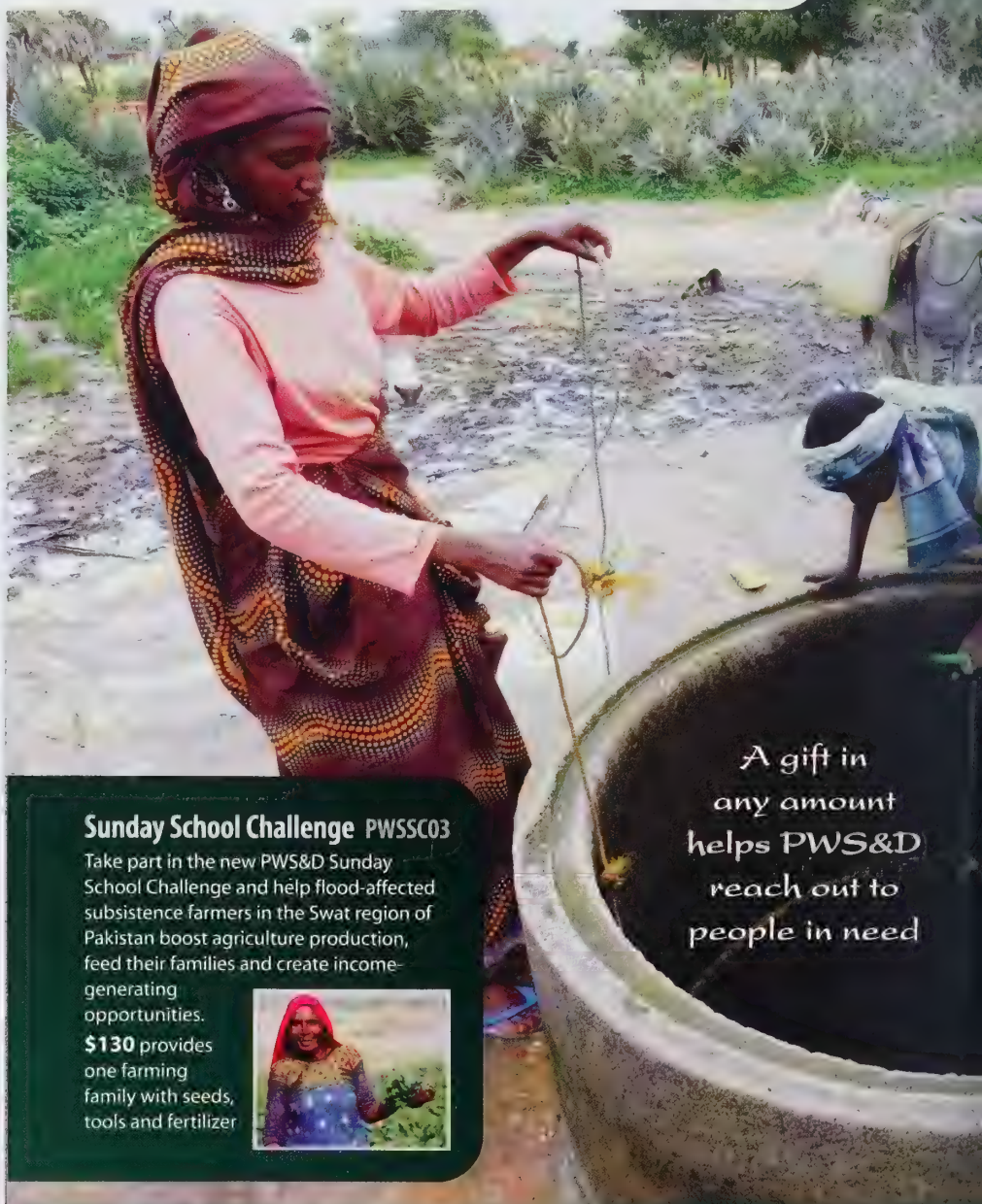


A gift in any
amount will make
a difference
for all of these
projects

Presbyterian World Service & Development

is the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. PWS&D's sustainable development programs help communities around the world overcome poverty. Find out more at www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd.

Mak



A gift in
any amount
helps PWS&D
reach out to
people in need

Sunday School Challenge PWSSC03

Take part in the new PWS&D Sunday School Challenge and help flood-affected subsistence farmers in the Swat region of Pakistan boost agriculture production, feed their families and create income-generating opportunities.

\$130 provides one farming family with seeds, tools and fertilizer



a difference around the world!

Work for a World Without AIDS PWHIV01

\$5 trains one home-based care volunteer

\$50 provides vitamin supplements to vulnerable children along with HIV and AIDS testing

\$90 offers free AIDS testing to one village

Clean Water and Sanitation PWH20

\$35 installs a latrine to improve sanitation

\$3,700 constructs a rainwater tank for school children

\$4,500 rehabilitates a shallow well or borehole

\$7,000 builds a village well

Education and Small Business Development PWESB01

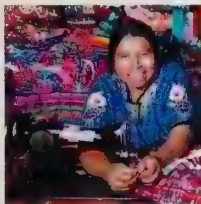
\$80 provides a group of women with literacy and vocational training for one month

\$120 sends a vulnerable child to school for one year

\$215 enables 40 people to participate in a business training program

\$350 provides one sewing machine to someone living with a disability

\$500 helps a women's group start a small business fund



Call today to sign up for easy monthly giving.



Establish Food Security PWAGR01

\$2 provides a farmer with a fruit tree sapling

\$10 trains a farmer in soil and water conservation

\$30 provides a family with seeds and training on how to grow more food

\$85 provides a farmer with a pig

\$120 provides a goat to a vulnerable family

\$200 provides a farmer with an "agricultural package" of fruit tree saplings, vegetables and tools

\$1,200 builds a water storage pond for irrigation

\$3,000 rebuilds 100 metres of irrigation canals for farmers

Build Healthy Communities PWHEA01

\$5 provides a mosquito net

\$25 provides an orphan with maize and beans for one year

\$30 allows a community health volunteer to provide health care in a remote village

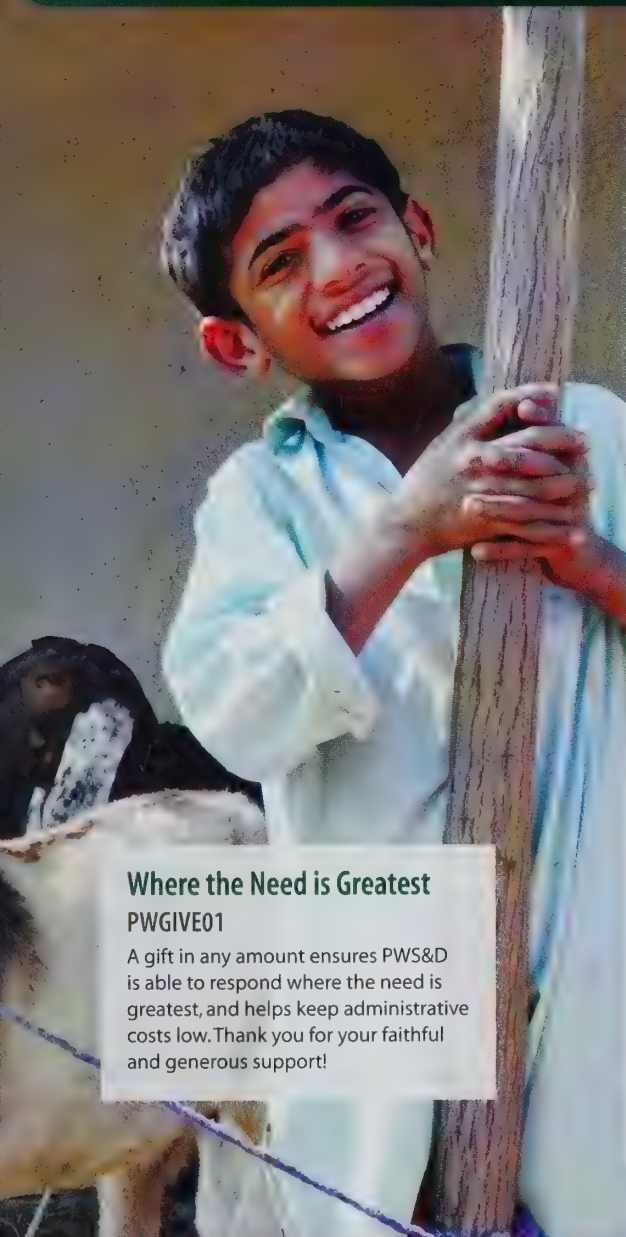
\$300 supplies a wheelchair for someone with a physical disability

\$300 provides a student with training to become a nutrition promoter in her community

\$4,000 constructs a maternal delivery room and provides pediatric equipment in Afghanistan



PWS&D accesses matching funds from the government for specific programs to help make your donations go even further.



Where the Need is Greatest

PWGIVE01

A gift in any amount ensures PWS&D is able to respond where the need is greatest, and helps keep administrative costs low. Thank you for your faithful and generous support!

Respond to Emergencies

PWEMRG01

\$45 provides a hygiene kit for a family, including soap, towels, toothpaste, toothbrushes and feminine hygiene products

\$67 provides vegetable seeds and fruit trees for a family for one growing season

\$100 helps provide a displaced family with an emergency food package lasting one month

\$3,000 builds a transitional home for one family



Support Refugees

PWREF01

\$20 helps provide medication and nutritional supplements for a malnourished refugee child for six months

\$25 conducts three sessions providing emotional support and healing for a refugee following conflict and violence

Many of these programs are supported in partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a coalition of 15 church-based agencies working together to end hunger.

International Ministries sends mission personnel and supports leadership development, evangelism and innovative church programs of church partners around the world to fulfill the worldwide mission of Jesus Christ. The following projects complement the work being accomplished through your gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing*.



Rebuild Christian Schools

IMR001 (Romania); IMHU01 (Hungary);
IMUK01 (Ukraine)

The Christian schools of the Reformed Church in Eastern Europe have only recently been reopened after years of neglect under the Communist regime. Your gifts will help the church repair buildings and purchase updated equipment and school supplies so that they can continue to offer youth a quality education in a Christian environment.

\$20 buys school supplies for an elementary school student for one year

\$30 buys school supplies for a secondary school student for one year

\$500-\$2,000 helps repair school buildings

Train a Church Leader

IMGH01

Many small and rural congregations in Ghana are served by lay members who work under the direction of a District Minister. Your gift will help the Presbyterian Church of Ghana's lay ministries training programs equip these leaders to be effective.

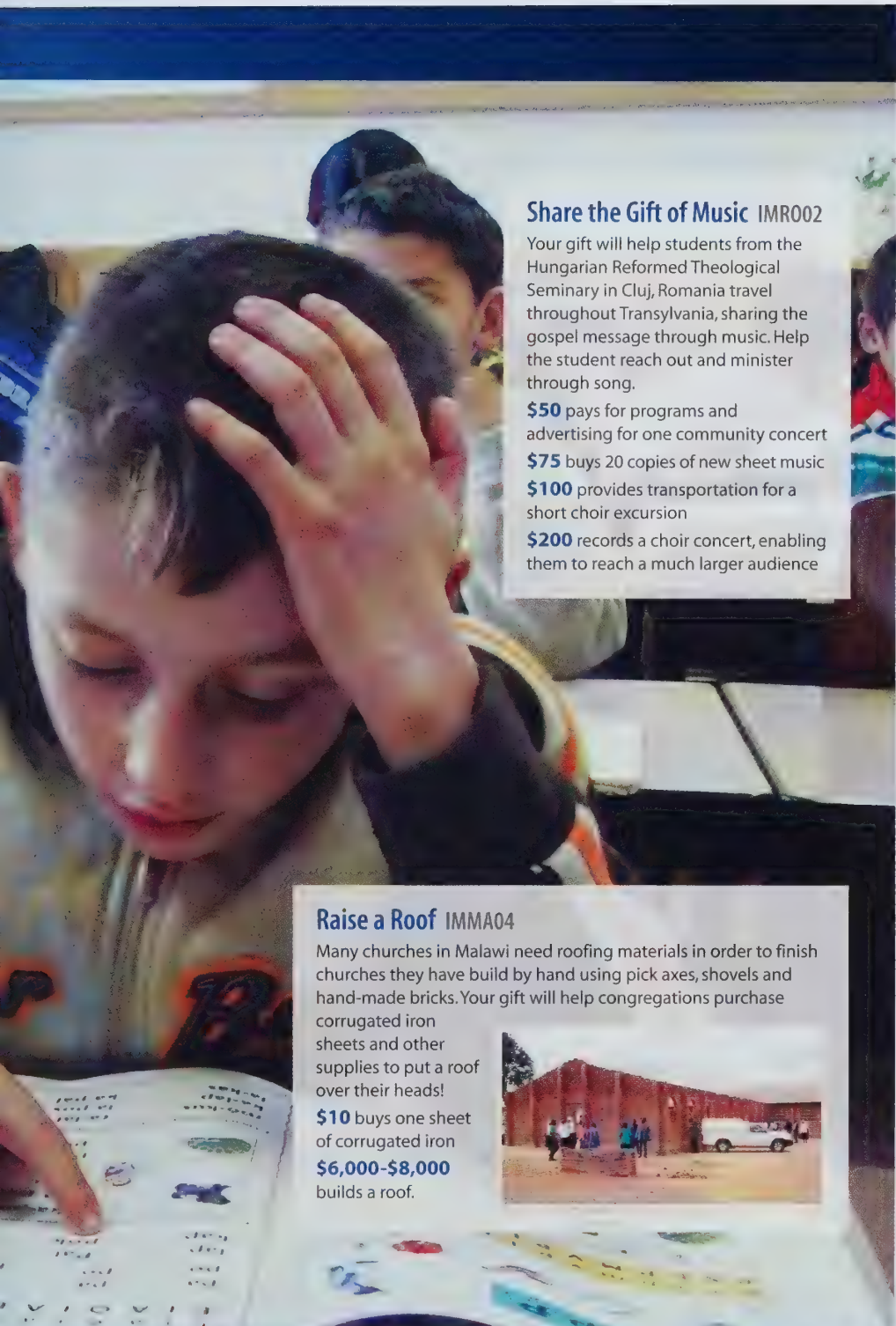
\$25 buys course manuals for one student for one series of classes

\$100 provides one student with tuition, room and board for one week at a lay training school

\$325 provides three weeks of training and books for a student



A gift in
any amount
will help
with all of
these
projects



Share the Gift of Music IMR002

Your gift will help students from the Hungarian Reformed Theological Seminary in Cluj, Romania travel throughout Transylvania, sharing the gospel message through music. Help the student reach out and minister through song.

\$50 pays for programs and advertising for one community concert

\$75 buys 20 copies of new sheet music

\$100 provides transportation for a short choir excursion

\$200 records a choir concert, enabling them to reach a much larger audience

Raise a Roof IMMA04

Many churches in Malawi need roofing materials in order to finish churches they have build by hand using pick axes, shovels and hand-made bricks. Your gift will help congregations purchase corrugated iron sheets and other supplies to put a roof over their heads!

\$10 buys one sheet of corrugated iron

\$6,000-\$8,000 builds a roof.



A photograph of a man and a woman standing next to a row of bicycles. The man, on the left, is wearing a dark suit, a light-colored shirt, and a tie. He is smiling and has his hand on the handlebar of a bicycle. The woman, on the right, is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and a patterned skirt. She is also smiling. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Buy a Minister a Bike

IMKE01 (Kenya);
IMMA01 (Malawi)

In Kenya and Malawi ministers must often travel considerable distances to teach and visit congregations in rural and remote areas. Your gift will help purchase bicycles so that ministers can share God's love with more people.

\$25 provides bicycle repairs

\$80 buys one standard bicycle

\$150 buys one mountain bike

Translate the Bible IMTA01 (Taiwan);

IMIN04 (Nigeria); IMMU01 (Mauritius)

Did you know there are still some people who cannot read the Word of God in their own language? Your gift in any amount will help with translation and printing costs so that people in Taiwan, Nigeria and Mauritius can read and understand the Bible in a language that speaks to their heart.



\$2 helps print the New Testament in Creole (Mauritius)

\$10 helps print a Bible in Igbo (Nigeria)

\$15 helps print a Hakka Bible (Taiwan)

Find more projects online at www.presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29
ISAIAH 64:1-6
GOD IS
WE ARE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30
PSALM 80:17-19
GOD IS
WE ARE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1
1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9
GOD IS
WE ARE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2
MARK 13:24-27
GOD IS
WE ARE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3
MARK 13:32-35
GOD IS
WE ARE

Spend a few moments reflecting on the image(s) of God. How do they make you feel? Safe, calm, etc. How do you react to the image(s) of God's people (or yourself)? Discuss with others if you are able. Pray that the Good News of this season will be with all peoples.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4
PSALM 85:1-2
GOD IS
WE ARE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7
PSALM 85:8-9
GOD IS
WE ARE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8
PSALM 85:11-13
GOD IS
WE ARE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9
2 PETER 3:8-9
GOD IS
WE ARE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10
2 PETER 3:10-15A
GOD IS
WE ARE

Our God is comforting, encouraging and patient with us. Give thanks for that and pass it on. Think of what images of God you can share with others.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13
ISAIAH 61:10-11
GOD IS
WE ARE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14
LUKE 1:46B-49
GOD IS
WE ARE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15
LUKE 1:50-55
GOD IS
WE ARE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16
1 THESSALONIANS 5:6-11
GOD IS
WE ARE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17
1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24
GOD IS
WE ARE

God is strong and powerful. There is nothing God cannot do. How does this make you feel? Pray for those who are lost, lonely, imprisoned and marginalized, that they may see the light of God's saving grace

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20
PSALM 89:24-26
GOD IS
WE ARE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21
ROMANS 16:25-27
GOD IS
WE ARE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22
PSALM 89:19-23
GOD IS
WE ARE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23
LUKE 1:26-30
GOD IS
WE ARE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24
CHRISTMAS EVE
LUKE 1:31-38
GOD IS
WE ARE

God's love is ever constant. In this season of love reflect upon how you experience God's love and how you can bring it to others. Be thankful for the many good gifts you have.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27
ISAIAH 62:6-9
GOD IS
WE ARE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28
ISAIAH 62:10-12
GOD IS
WE ARE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29
PSALM 97:1-6
GOD IS
WE ARE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30
PSALM 97:9-12
GOD IS
WE ARE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31
TITUS 3:4-7
GOD IS
WE ARE

Christ is born. Prayerfully consider how you will share the Good News of his coming in your life with all peoples everywhere. Pray that everything he represents will take precedence in your life and that the world may experience some of this.

PRESBYTERIAN
RECORD



Shaping the Future

COLLEGES PREPARE GRADUATES FOR CHALLENGES AND CHANGE.

Responding to Changes in Church and Society

Knox College, Toronto

In May, Knox graduated 25 students—men and women who have begun their ministries in congregations, public life, seminary education and mission appointments. In September we welcomed 28 new students who have begun their preparation for service wherever God calls them. This is the rhythm of life at a theological college.

At Knox, it is a tradition that has existed for more than 165 years—to prepare creative and dynamic leaders for ordination and lay positions who, through their work in communities of faith locally, nationally, and internationally, are improving the quality of religious and public life wherever they are.

Offering eight degree programs, Knox's educational experience is rooted in history but focused on the current context of ministry. Students may complete a degree that will prepare them for a ministry of word and sacrament or Christian education, but they also have the option to further their studies at a doctoral level, thereby creating the next generation of theological scholars for our denomination.

Students learn in a building that is almost 100 years old, but they are face-to-face with the diversity and technology of the future. Through a partnership with the Toronto School of Theology and a relationship with the University of Toronto, Knox offers its students access to academic resources and a diverse faculty that provide a depth and breadth to learning that is found in only a few other places in the world.

Christian education was a focus of the Ewart legacy and this continues through the programs of the Ewart Centre for Lay Education. Offering non-degree certificates to laity, the Centre marks an important milestone this year as it celebrates its 10th anniversary. With the role of laity ever-changing ➤

and increasing in many areas of church life, the preparation and resources available to them through this program has become so much more important. Through specialized training, special lectures and resources, the Centre continues to equip lay leaders to serve in their communities and congregations.

Knox's commitment to lifelong learning drives the Centre for Continuing Education. By combining the Ada Adams and Charles H. MacDonald Memorial Lectureships this year, attendees will reflect on case studies of change that three congregations have undertaken in their vision to build and maintain healthy communities of faith. We know this is a topic of great importance to many in ministry and one that we will continue

to explore not only at this event but annually over the next few years.

It is becoming more and more evident to us at Knox that there is a new appetite for theological study and with it a questioning as to whether the values of a secular culture can sustain the type of living that has ultimate value. What an opportunity this is for Knox College in light of our mission to prepare students who can respond effectively to the possibilities and challenges of this changing religious landscape, graduates who not only have the knowledge and skills but also the heart needed to reshape the world in which we live. ■

utoronto.ca/knox

Preparing Missional Leaders

Presbyterian College, Montreal

For many years, the hot question in theological education was figuring out what kind of seminaries we needed. Then we began to ask what kind of graduates we needed. We have only recently realized that if our mission is impacting an increasingly secular culture with the gospel, our mandate can only be fulfilled by cutting-edge missional churches working effectively in the trenches in transformative ways. Once we have an idea of what those churches will need to look like, then we can think about what seminaries need to do to prepare the people who can effectively lead these new kinds of churches.

While Presbyterian College, Montreal offers all the required programs and components to satisfy the Presbyterian Church's requirements for ordination, teaching the academic portions to the highest standards, that's not where it ends for us.

We work in collaboration with one of the best Canadian universities, where ministry candidates interact with some of the leading theological faculty and scholars. Additional seminars, workshops and conferences expose students to visiting humanities scholars who are leaders in their fields. The network of libraries and resources made available to our students through McGill University is second to none.

The practical components of preparation for service in the church happen in one of the most vibrant, diverse and secular cities in North America where all the challenges and opportunities of urban ministry are open to our students. At the same time, dozens of congregations and ministries in the perimeter communities around Montreal allow students to experience and prepare for the realities of rural and suburban ministry.

Since they graduated from Presbyterian College in the spring of 2011, half a dozen

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with Rev. Dr. Paula Sampson

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with Rev. Dr. Richard Topping



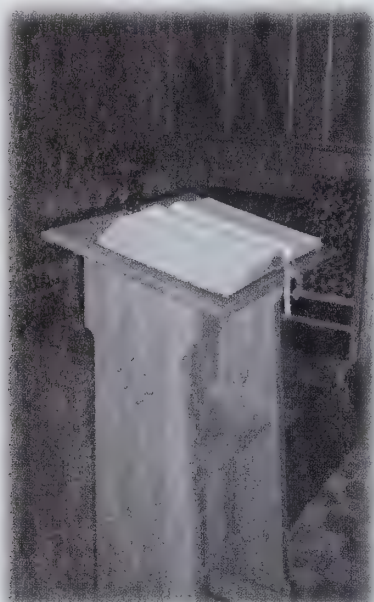
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Will you be one of them?

info@presbyteriancollege.ca



Presbyterian College
Preparing Missional Leaders

men and women who benefited from this process have already been ordained and begun active ministry in Canadian Presbyterian congregations, joining more than 100 of our alumni already in active service across Canada. Statistics suggest that like previous Presbyterian College graduates, they will be among the most enduring in their ministry.

But that's not where it ends, either.

In their first couple of years in a congregation, new ministers are confronted with some of the most difficult challenges of their lives. A new program recently initiated at Presbyterian College offers graduates a chance to come back, a few years into their ministry, to compare notes, be encouraged and readjust their skills. Graduates who have been through the program tell us that one of the best parts of this follow-up support are the ongoing mentoring and accountability relationships that are formed with other ministers who know the struggles and isolation of congregational ministry.

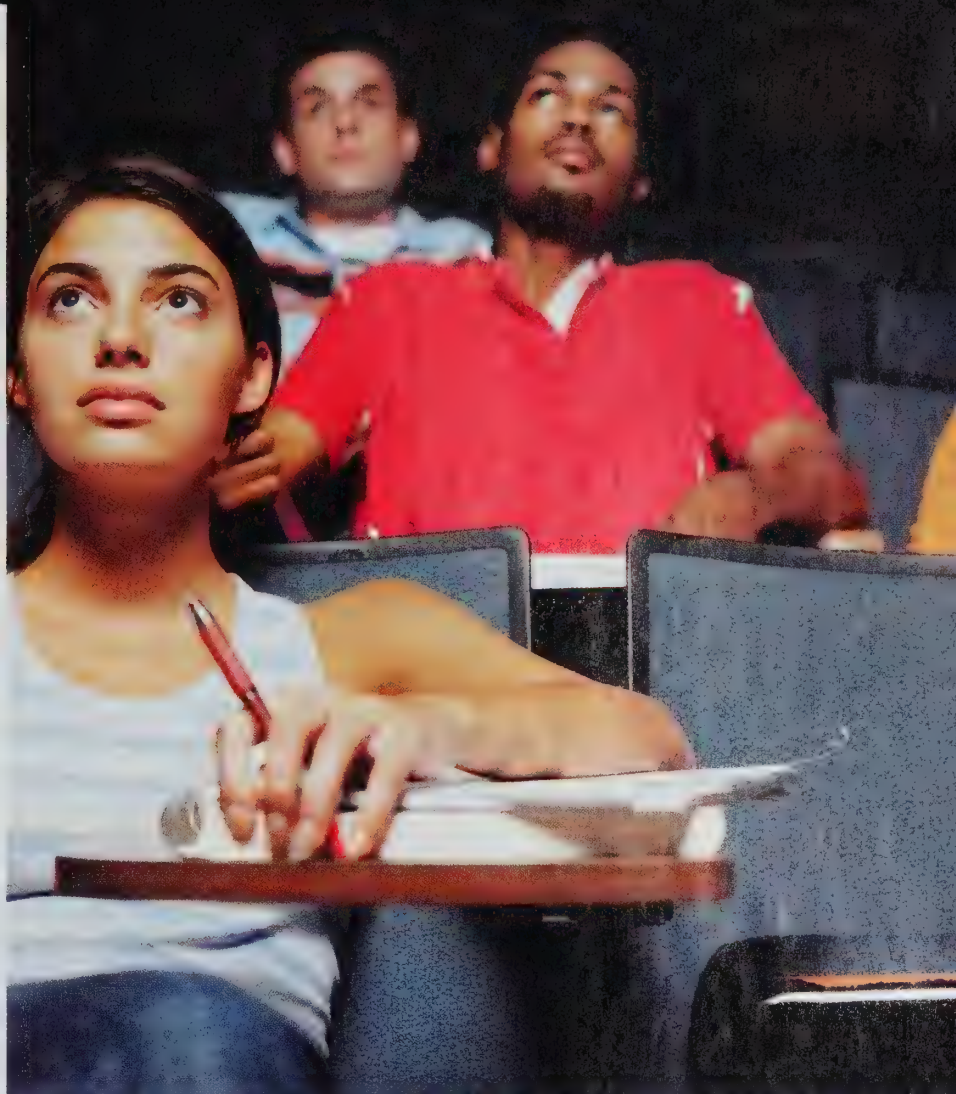
And for those alumni who've been at it for a while, there's nothing like coming home for continuing education week to catch up with former classmates and reflect together on the changing landscape of church ministry in the Canadian context. (The 2012 program will be held Feb. 13 to 17 and will feature some of our faculty members. Watch the *Record* and the college's website for details.)

Realizing that a church's chances of thriving depend on a whole team of key leaders who "get" the mission, rather than just on a single, well-qualified minister, Presbyterian College also offers workshops and training sessions for elders, as well as a growing lay education program. ■
presbyteriancollege.ca

Exciting Opportunities

St. Andrew's Hall and VST

St. Andrew's Hall is the Presbyterian College on the campus of the University of British Columbia which exercises its charter to teach theology through its association with the Vancouver School of Theology. It is a particular delight ➤



ELDERS' INSTITUTE
St. Andrew's Hall

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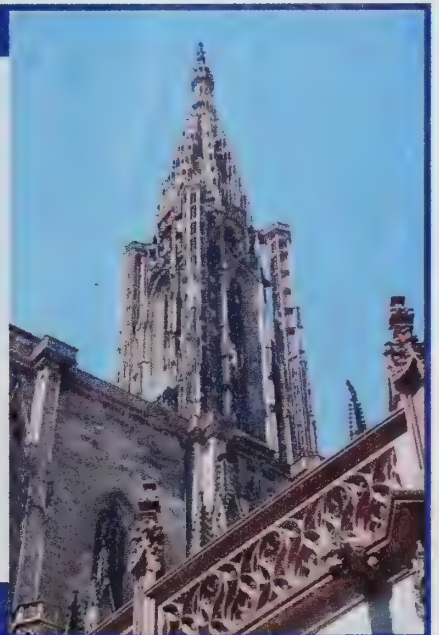


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EDUCATION

that the entering class of Presbyterians at VST is the largest in many years, almost certainly in the history of the school. We also welcome Dr. Hans Kouwenberg to the faculty as Presbyterian Director of Denominational Formation. Dr. Kouwenberg will have a key role in shaping future ministers of the Presbyterian Church. He has had a notable and varied ministry in the church, culminating in his service as moderator of the 133rd General Assembly. He replaces the recently retired Dr. Glen Davis who is also a former moderator of the General Assembly. Dr. Kouwenberg joins Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Richard Topping, Roberta Clare and Stephen Farris as Presbyterian teachers at VST. Principal Wendy Fletcher will go on a well deserved sabbatical leave in 2012. During that time Stephen Farris will serve as Acting Principal of VST in addition to his duties as Dean of St. Andrew's Hall.

Another new face on campus is that of

Ms. Leah Yoo, a recent graduate of VST, appointed Director of Campus Ministry, a newly created position at St. Andrew's Hall. The largest religious self-identification in B.C. at 36 per cent of the population is "no religion." In a very secular setting such as Vancouver, a theological college must be more than an educational institution; it must also be a centre of mission. We pray God's blessing on Leah as she reaches out gently and respectfully with the gospel of Jesus Christ to residents of St. Andrew's Hall and to the university community.

The Elders' Institute, directed by Dr. Roberta Clare, continues its work of equipping the elders of the church for effective ministry through online courses, workshops and conferences and the provision of online resources. A particularly delightful event is the annual Pre-Assembly Workshops, held this year at Oakridge Church in London, Ont. Next year, "PAW" will be held in St. Andrew's Church,

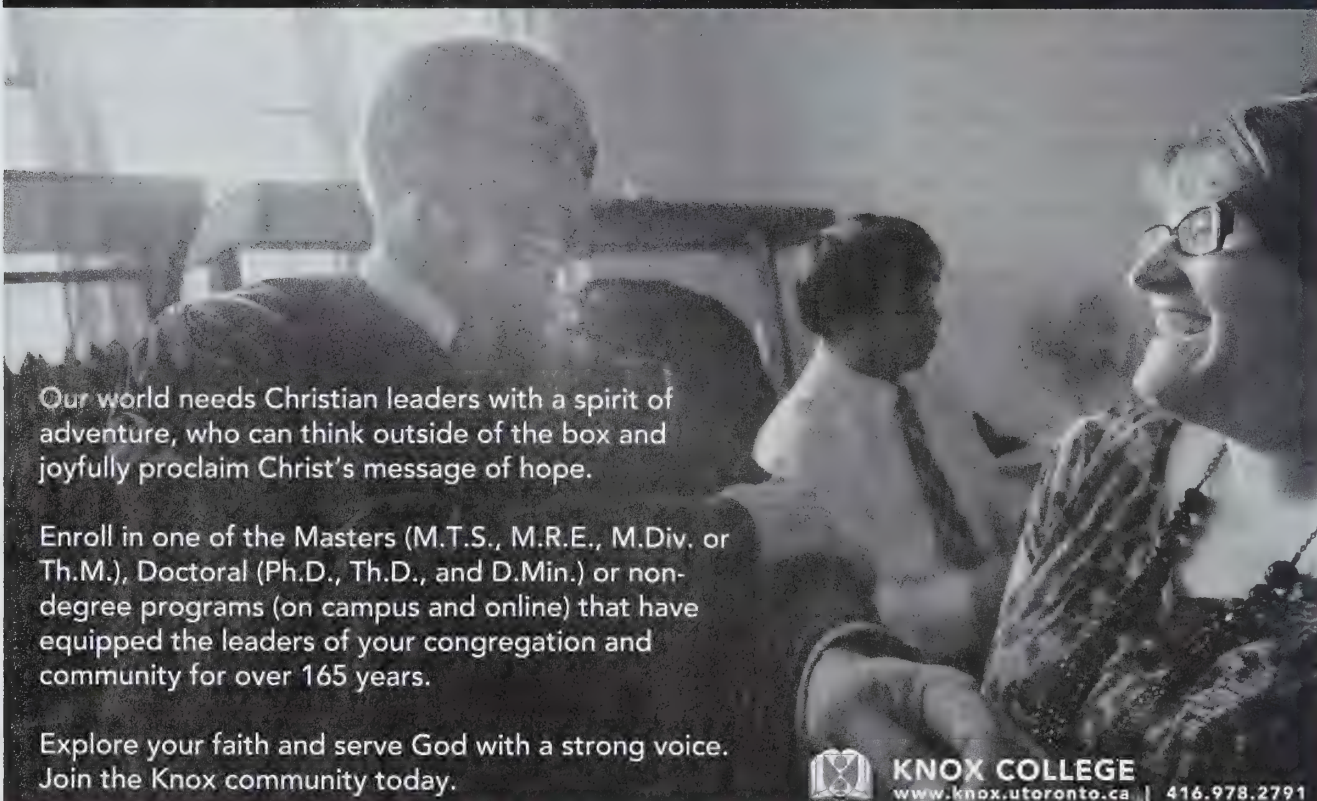
Scarborough, Ont., on the theme "Basics for a Changing World."

St. Andrew's Hall has come to an agreement with Concert Properties, a prominent development company, which will build and administer a 15-storey tower on the site for rental housing for faculty, staff, students and other members of the university community. The project was recently approved by the Development Permit Board of UBC. As a result of this agreement, St. Andrew's Hall plans to construct a two-storey addition that will house a chapel/community space, meeting rooms and staff offices. The proceeds of the agreement will also help fund campus ministry. As of the time of writing this article, there still remain several permissions to be obtained. We are hopeful that this will happen shortly.

The Board of St. Andrew's is deeply thankful for the opportunities for service that await us. ■

standrews.edu

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LIFE DESPITE FAMINE

SPECIAL TO THE PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

A LOOK INSIDE
KENYA'S DADAAB
REFUGEE CAMP.

BY BARB SUMMERS



The day before I left for East Africa, I was watching a news story covering the humanitarian crisis: millions starving, famine sweeping across the land, people wandering for days through the desert in search of food and shelter. Somalia seemed on the brink of falling apart. Kenya, Ethiopia and other neighbouring countries didn't seem far behind.

And then it struck me. What was I doing? What kind of insane journey into the heart of hunger did I imagine I was capable of undertaking? In my job with Presbyterian World Service and Development, I often travel to developing countries in order to witness the work of our programs to overcome poverty and build new futures for marginalized people. I regularly comfort myself that my good farm upbringing will give me the stamina (and stomach) for another adventure into the developing world.

But this seemed too much. The sunken eyes that stared back at me from the television were simply too many. I had never undertaken a trip like this before—a situation dubbed the worst humanitarian crisis of our time—where the scale and scope of need is surely enough to weaken the knees of even the most veteran aid worker. ➤

Preparing for new refugee housing plots in Dadaab, Kenya.



A woman walks with her children just outside Dadaab refugee camp.

Yet here I was, in the heat of July, packing water purification tablets and malaria pills, heading into the storm.

My nearly three-week trip to East Africa opened my eyes to a world beyond what I had ever imagined. The need is overwhelming but the full story rarely penetrates beyond the headlines and photo galleries. There is a story behind the images of sunken eyes, and you might be surprised at the hope, passion and inspiration you will find there.

My journey to the Dadaab refugee camps near the Kenya-Somalia border was an exhausting 11-hour drive from Nairobi that I took as part of a 27-vehicle UN convoy with armed escort. Bumping along rough roads, I was jammed in the back of a Land Cruiser with several emergency relief workers, staring out at an unforgiving landscape. There was dry, red sand as far as the eye could see, covered by a thin dabbling of leafless shrubs where it was possible for bandits to hide, and therefore the need for security.

Our vehicles were filled to overflowing with supplies, including food, medical items and tents. Although I was sure all circulation had been cut off at my waist and my neck was sore from trying to avoid hitting my head as we flew over the bumps, as I looked ahead down the long, barren road into Dadaab, it occurred to me that there was another way into the camp. I could have taken the journey that hundreds of thousands have already taken and who knows how many more are undertaking at this very moment. Interviews I later conducted with refugees described how some travel 25 days by foot through dangerous countryside, carrying children and the few household supplies they can manage, and assisting the elderly.

MEDIA STORIES have done a good job of painting these bleak scenarios. Images coming from the camp entry points

are horrifying. People look unbearably weak and gaunt. The faces are haunting and expressionless, as if it takes too much energy to smile or blink. There are heartbreaking tales of parents forced to leave sick children behind in order to save the rest of the family. There are soul-numbing stories of attacks on women.

Rarely do the media reports go much further than the reception centres where refugees continue to arrive to the tune of about 850 every day, a slight decrease from the peak of over 1,000 per day in July and August. It's easy to understand why the cameras and television personalities are so interested, for the reception centres—to an outside eye—look strikingly bleak.

However, if you step through the main gates, you enter the new world a Somali refugee is greeted with, and it's one of hope and renewal. My time at Dadaab revealed a place where aid agencies work together with the united goal of helping those in need. Christian, Muslim, secular—organizations from around the world are overcoming religious, cultural and language barriers in a common mission of delivering aid.

WHEN THE REFUGEES ARRIVE AT DADAAB, it's not a time for mourning but celebrating. The long trek is over. They have come with the dream of a place where they will find food, clean water, shelter and maybe even somewhere to call home.

The weak are immediately given high-energy biscuits and I literally watched the colour return to the faces of those who ate. Children, once mute and silent out of weakness, almost immediately start to mumble and gargle, some even finding the energy to playfully poke at a sibling.

The biscuits are washed down with water—such a relief after so many days in the hot, dry desert. They then enter a waiting area, where program staff explain over megaphones how the system will work. And what a system! It is a finely-tuned assembly line of aid agencies from around the world. The World Food Programme provides food rations. UN's refugee agency distributes tents. The Muslim community has rallied to provide clothing. Doctors Without Borders provides vaccinations for children. There are agencies working in women's rights. Agencies building wells and latrines. Agencies that deal more with behind-the-scenes work like conducting needs assessments and gathering statistics to highlight any weaknesses. Our church's partners in Dadaab are through the ACT Alliance and they have a variety of functions, most notably and impressively to oversee day-to-day camp management, ensuring everything is operating effectively and that refugees receive the dedicated, compassionate care they deserve. The reception areas process thousands of people every week. Although there is still a backlog of about 40,000 refugees, the miracle of the whole process is how quickly and effectively it's working.

No doubt about it, there are incredible challenges to tackle. As well as dealing with the moment-to-moment needs of refugees, tension between the local Kenyan host community and the new arrivals is thorny. Negotiations are often heated and complex. However, unique solutions are created. Aid groups employ local community members to work on the construction of new camp sites, providing them with a valuable source of income during a year when food is expensive and sparse, and also ensuring they're involved in the planning process. The host community has become much more supportive and cooperative.

MORE THAN 38,000 REFUGEES have been relocated from the outskirts of existing camps into new sites; a testament to the staff who are able to get new sites up and operating within incredibly tight timelines. I visited an area where church partners were working to designate a new camp and provide homes for another 90,000 refugees. Shrubs were cleared and white lines were drawn across the sand at a hurried pace, each family plot with one tent measuring 10x12 metres. It was like watching an entire subdivision going up before my eyes.

In such close quarters, disputes and conflict are inevitable. Community Peace and Safety Teams (CPSTs) have been established for exactly this reason. Estimates indicate there is one security officer per 1,800 people. Obviously, response times are slow and the strain on services offered is high. Instead of relying on outside help, camp staff recruit the refugees themselves to take on roles as CPST members, each one serving as a resourceful blend of volunteer firefighter, police officer, counsellor and medic. They receive training in how to resolve issues, negotiate, handle complaints, identify medical issues and ease tensions. With the particularly difficult or violent cases being referred to the police department, the CPSTs have been effective at dealing with issues of domestic violence, brawls, encroachment and robberies.

When a fire broke out in the local market a few months ago, the results could have been devastating. Team members acted quickly and the fire was brought under control before much damage was done. When two young men started fighting at a water tap over who could draw water first, the situation quickly escalated with each man's family and friends getting involved. Sticks and stones were used as weapons, women were biting and scratching, and people hit one another with jerry cans. The local CPST member was quick

to jump in and soon managed to calm the opposing sides.

Life at the camps is far from easy—there are religious tensions, supply shortages and health issues, not to mention the hyenas that come at night and threaten small children. But it's so much more than the stark images peering back at you from your television screens. People have set up small businesses within the camp proving how hard it is to keep a true entrepreneur down. Families celebrate and give thanks for the food rations and water taps. Children are accessing educational opportunities. And dedicated aid workers wander among the tents, knocking on flaps to ➤



Top: A Masaai woman in Kenya sits among bags of grain supplied by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. **Bottom:** The author plants a Neem tree in Kenya—an initiative to help combat deforestation in the area.



Beneficiaries line up to receive food rations at a food distribution centre in Kenya.

give greetings, addressing people by their names, and asking how they are doing.

There is a whole world of hope and help that is rising from the dusty landscape.

IT'S VERY CANADIAN—and dare I say, very Presbyterian—of us to ask, “So how do we fix this?” I understand the sentiment but I don’t think it’s the question we should ask.

I’ve given up looking for a “solution” to the crisis in East Africa in the way we usually think of solving problems. This is not a Rubik’s Cube where all the colours will magically align. Life rarely works that way—especially when you’re dealing with complex governments, generations of abuses and corruption, plus changing economic and climatic systems. We have to stop trying to find simple answers to complex problems. However, that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t do what we can to help.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.” (Proverbs 3:5) The situation in East Africa is too much for me to comprehend or figure out on my own, but I trust that ultimately God is in control. Our role is to respond to needs as best we can with the gifts God has given us.

Wendy Oketch is one of the relief workers I met at Dadaab. She’s a single mother and only 24 years old, and she’s given her life to helping others. With all that she sees and does, and the amount of hours she works, I think I expected her to be bitter, worn out and cynical. Instead, her words still resonate in my head: “At the end of the day, I can

say that I helped someone else. That’s what keeps me going.”

That’s enough for me, too. Perhaps if we stop trying to focus on finding the solutions for tomorrow and concentrate on those we can help today, we will not only be more effective, but we will be better able to have realistic conversations about how to provide aid and how we can work together to create lasting change.

Praise God! ■

Barb Summers is communications coordinator for Presbyterian World Service and Development.

OUR CHURCH IN EAST AFRICA

Working in partnership with the ACT Alliance, Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Canadian Churches in Action, Presbyterian World Service and Development is working in East Africa to provide food, nutritional supplements, clean water, shelter, hygiene kits, agriculture training and psycho-social support.

Nearly \$700,000 has been raised by congregations and individuals across the country. News updates are available on the PWS&D website at presbyterian.ca/pwsd.

FAMINE IN ETHIOPIA THEN & NOW

1984 WAS A YEAR OF DEATH AND HUNGER.
BY 2011, HOW MUCH HAS CHANGED? BY CONNIE WARDLE



INTERVIEW WITH

STUART CLARK,

SENIOR POLICY ANALYST FOR
THE CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

From 1984—the year of the last great famine in Ethiopia—until 1988, Stuart Clark was the Mennonite Central Committee’s area secretary for North Eastern Africa. Today, he is senior policy analyst for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and continues to keep an eye on food insecurity. He spoke to the *Record* about his experience, and what has changed between 1984 and 2011.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD: There’s been a lot of attention placed on the famine in East Africa recently, but it seems like what we’re seeing today is the newest chapter in a rather lengthy story. What are some of the things that have led us to this crisis point?

STUART CLARK: I would say there are three things that need to be talked about. One is the interplay between the productivity of the land and the population. That’s kind of an obvious thing. But there has been a rather rapid population growth in Eastern Africa; I think the numbers in Kenya and Uganda are about three per cent per year. So you have more people there. There has also been more frequent droughts; and of course right now we would automatically suggest that’s due to climate change and it may well have been. We’re not really sure. But the increasing frequency of droughts certainly stresses people whose livelihoods are

based, maybe not on every year being good, but only having one in seven years that are bad. That frequency has gone up.

And of course that productive capacity has another element: with more droughts and higher population and pressure on the land, the soils can also be quite depleted. The soils in Africa are amongst the oldest in the world. When soil forms it has a lot of minerals in it. Our soils here [in Canada] were formed relatively recently, geologically speaking, so they have a lot of minerals in them. So there’s an inherent fertility in the soil in a place like North America that there isn’t in Africa. If you don’t have chemical fertilizers and you don’t have a farming method that puts nutrients back into the land, then your productive capacity is affected by that as well as drought.

The second issue is politics. In 1984, Ethiopia was embroiled in a civil war. That was definitely playing a role in the development of the famine of 1984, which most Canadians know about. This time, it’s obvious that the complete breakdown of the state within Somalia is playing a huge role in the famine there. So again, at that level, that’s a major political factor like 1984.

PR: I know many aid groups have been having difficulty getting to the southern areas of Somalia that are controlled by Al-Shabaab [a militant Islamist group that has opposed foreign aid]. Was there that kind of difficulty delivering aid in the 1980s?

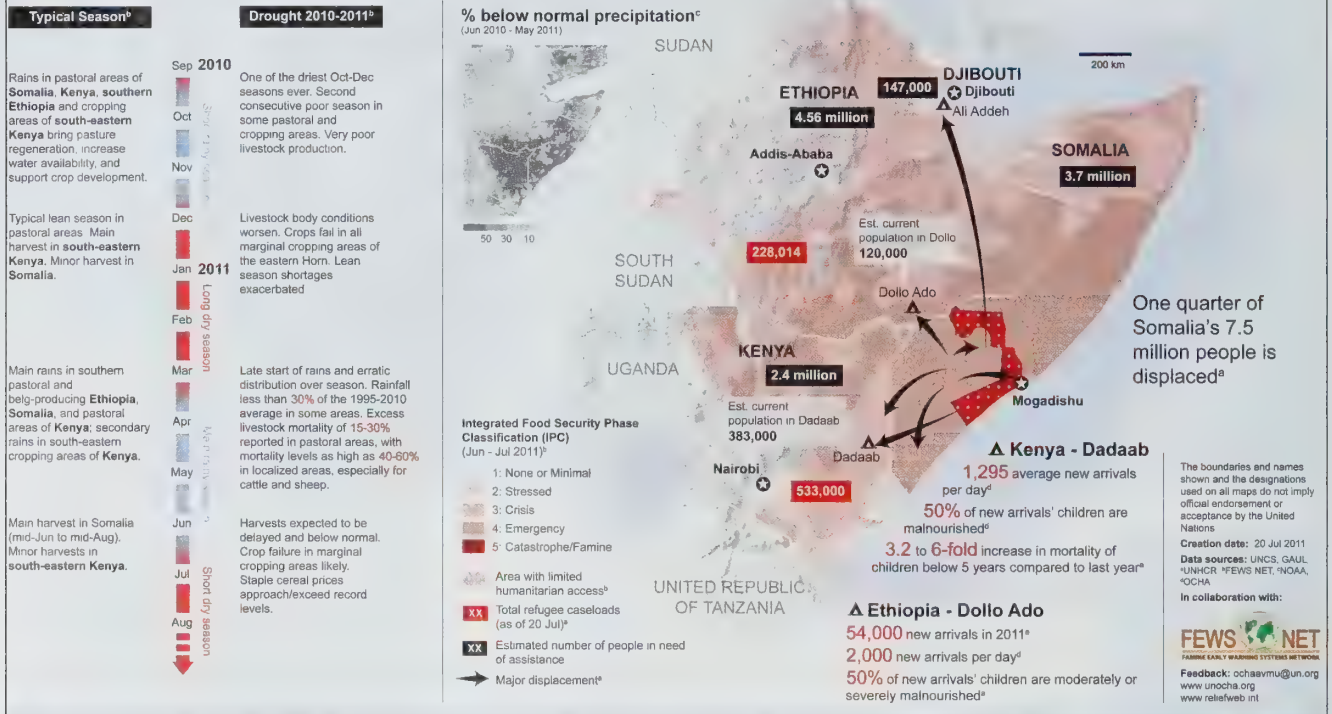
SC: There was because you couldn’t deliver food to the north except by providing it through Sudan, through aid organizations which were thinly veiled covers for the rebel ➤

Eastern Africa: Drought – Humanitarian Snapshot (as of 20 Jul 2011)



Food insecurity remains at emergency levels across parts of the Horn of Africa, famine has been declared in two regions of Southern Somalia. Humanitarian organizations are struggling to cope with the influx of Somali refugees in Ethiopia and Kenya. Malnutrition and mortality rates are alarmingly high in many parts of the region.

11.5 million
people in need of humanitarian assistance^d



A detailed look at the situation in East Africa, as of July 2011.

COURTESY OF OCHA

organizations. Conflicts based upon political difficulties are playing a role in both cases. And in this case, some organizations are quietly getting food in, but they don't make any noise about it at all because it's so insecure.

It is true that a difference between then and now is that a lot of northern agencies are suspect. They're suspect

SOME DEFINITIONS

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

—Definition crafted at the 1996 World Food Summit

Famine is the fifth and most severe stage of **food insecurity** according to the United Nations' ranking system. For the UN to officially declare a food emergency to be a famine, 20 per cent of households must face extreme food shortages, rates of malnutrition must be above 30 per cent, and two deaths out of every 10,000 adults per day must be caused by a lack of food.

because of things like Afghanistan, where the only way that you could be involved was to be connected with one of the combatants—the U.S., Canada, whatever. That has undermined the neutrality of humanitarian organizations, which has made it more difficult now than it was in 1984.

The third thing that is contributing—or has changed—is government support structures and government policies. And there I'm speaking specifically about the Ethiopian Productive Safety Net Program. After the 2002 food emergency in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian government and many Ethiopians said, y'know, we need to stop being the begging bowl of the world. We need to get our act together, and do something that doesn't mean every few years we appeal to the international community for emergency assistance. So they established something called the Productive Safety Net Program, which guarantees people who are categorized as food insecure with a certain amount of work and payment for that work in the form of food or cash or a combination of both every year. Those people that would be the first to suffer in the past now have this government program to count upon.

And that program has been going on for five or six years at scale; it's already a large program. It's probably the most

significant experiment of its type in the world for this sort of safety net to prevent the development of famines or extreme food insecurity. And it really is serving many parts of Ethiopia quite well. It does not cover the whole country, and the programs for the pastoralists have been the hardest to organize.

PR: Has this famine been putting a lot of strain on that safety net?

SC: No, on the contrary I think the existence of the safety net has greatly reduced the impact of the drought and the food emergency in Ethiopia. It's really worked. And it's a good news story which I think is why I'd want to mention it, because that's a big change. Back in 1984, the Ethiopian government was busy fighting a civil war and they wanted to use food as a weapon to fight against the rebels. So it's a very different situation. So well done by the Ethiopian government.

PR: "Food security" is one of those terms that we throw around a lot in discussions about poverty and famine. But I suspect a lot of people don't fully understand what it means, or what it means to be "food secure" or "food insecure."

SC: There is a formal definition for food security by the FAO [the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization], and then it comes up for those who talk about a human right to adequate food. But I think in layman's language, food security is a state whereby individuals or households have a reasonable expectation of having adequate food now and in the future. So food insecurity applies to a state where individuals or households either don't have enough food now, or within the foreseeable future, they have doubts about their ability to have food. Now that obviously has degrees. We have food insecure people in Canada: people who are on welfare and whose welfare rates simply are not adequate to both buy food and pay rent would be classified as food insecure because they don't know for sure if they will be able to buy enough food for their family. But that's a far cry from the food insecurity of pastoralists who have lost all of their herds and are walking out of Somalia to Kenya looking for some food. But in each case it's this element of not having enough food for now, and/or having an uncertainty about having food in the foreseeable future.

PR: You've written a number of articles recently about shrinking reserves in international food supplies and the rising price of food. What are the main things that affect the cost of food? How do you set an international food price, for example?



Women line up for food and supplies from an Islamic charity in the Dadaab refugee camp.

SC: The international food price formation has been very much influenced in recent years by the disappearance of regular, predictable surpluses. So that's meant that international food prices are more volatile. They're more insecure. Now unfortunately, volatility and insecurity in price is also an investment opportunity. So there's been a financialization of food whereby investors can buy various kinds of, let's call them instruments, that are based upon food prices. They can bet that the food price is going to go down, and if it does they make money. They can bet that the food price will go up, and if it does they will make money. In this way investors have become a big factor and as they use these instruments, they make the swings in prices greater and greater.

PR: So what kind of impact do these more esoteric food prices have on a local market, like a village market in Ethiopia?

SC: In two ways. In the first case, because many African countries are importers which means they have to buy on the international market; as the prices become more uncertain and more volatile, there's a risk premium associated with the price. Whoever's going to sell to them will add in an extra price to cover themselves in a case where the prices change too much. So that bumps up the price a little bit. The second thing it has an effect on is if it translates into the local market, and I'll say something about that in a moment.

But if you've got a lot of volatility in the local market, there might be a farmer who's trying to decide: will I put my six-year-old child in school (which costs money) or will I buy some extra fertilizer this year (which may actually strengthen the whole farm and next year I'll be able to do both)? If the prices are uncertain, he or she is likely to ➤



Somali refugees arrive on foot at the Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya.

decide not to invest in agriculture because it's just unsure. So that retards agricultural development.

And then the question about international prices and local prices. There are many factors that affect the local prices, including international prices. But what happens these days, and I've heard anecdotes and actual reports, is that people in the local market in Ethiopia, in deciding what they're going to offer their teff or corn for sale for, will use their cell phones to find out what the Chicago Board of Trade prices are doing.

PR: So do prices vary a lot day to day if these prices are swinging?

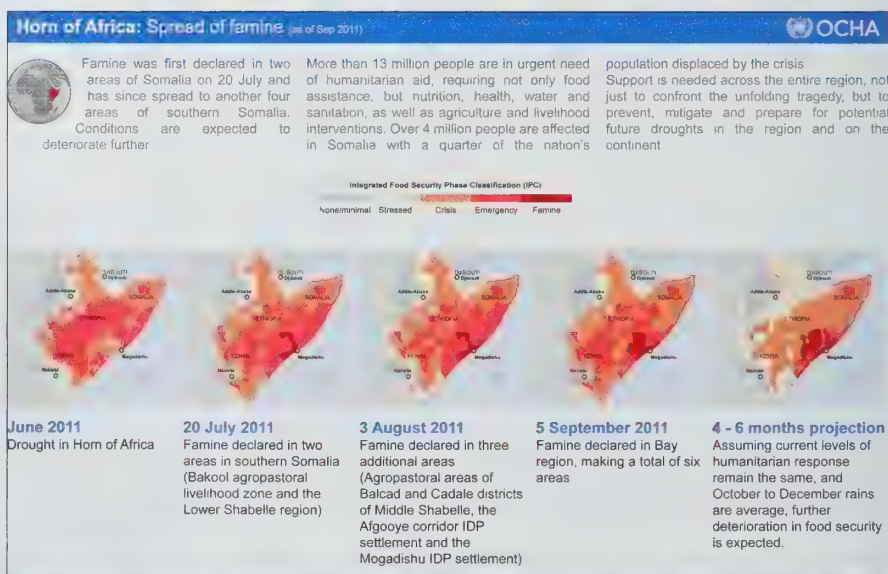
SC: Well, if the Chicago Board of Trade prices are swinging or going up rapidly, the tendency is for the traders to raise their prices as well. So there's a more rapid price transmission than there might be if it was the question of a local grain trader at a port importing one day at a certain price, waiting two months for it to get to Ethiopia, then transporting it inland and selling it to people who sell it in the local markets—well that could take quite a long time for that price blip to get to the local market. Now with cell phones it gets there instantly.

PR: What can Canadians do to help the situation? Obviously donating to PWS&D or CFGGB helps, but are there other things we can do or think about doing?

SC: I think it's important for all of us to think about our diets and for a lot of reasons. Obviously for personal health reasons, but the fact of the matter is that meat production—particularly the type of meat production that most of us are being supplied from—requires tremendous amounts of grain and tremendous amounts of water. And particularly in the case of grain, grain that is used for animal feeding isn't available for human food. That didn't used to matter. In fact there used to be such surpluses of grain that the real question was, what can we use it for? So until a few years ago, putting grain into animal feeding systems made a lot of sense, and even turning some of it into bio-fuels. But now as we start to get into a situation globally where those surpluses have disappeared, and in some cases it's

a question of whether the production is going to be adequate to meet the consumption needs, then we need to start questioning how we use grain. And for us, that's a question of meat in our diets, biofuels and those sorts of things. ■

Connie Wardle is the Record's staff writer. The Presbyterian Church, through PWS&D, is a member of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and much of the church's relief work in East Africa is carried out by CFGGB.



These maps show the dizzying rate at which the food situation in parts of East Africa escalated from an emergency to an outright famine.

COURTESY OF OCHA

HOW DID WE GET HERE? STEPS TO FAMINE

BY AMY MACLACHLAN



INTERVIEW WITH

MARK GORDON

SOMALIA FOOD ASSISTANCE
CLUSTER CHAIR WITH THE UN'S
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

The United Nations declared a famine in parts of Somalia on July 20—and things went downhill from there.

To help make sense of the crisis, the *Record* spoke with Mark Gordon who works for the UN's World Food Programme. Specifically, Gordon works with the cluster responsible for coordinating the food response inside Somalia. He provides a common information source for the 26 aid and relief organizations currently active in Somalia.

Gordon noted that, "although the world seemed to only become aware of the crisis in Somalia after the declaration of famine, the WFP (and other organizations) had indicated as far back as November 2010 that we were potentially heading into another crisis (similar to 2008, 2006 and 2001) for the Horn of Africa ... unfortunately, our prediction was correct."

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD: The famine is happening in what has traditionally been called Africa's breadbasket. What has been happening to seemingly eliminate this characteristic?

MARK GORDON: The main drivers of the crisis in 2011 were a combination of drought and below normal rainfall, high food, fuel and input prices, and conflict. While it is important to note that the 2011 crisis was preceded by two good seasons, the two good seasons were preceded in 2008/2009 with three consecutive poor rains and an ensuing food crisis in the Horn. The drivers of the current crisis recurring after only two seasons of good rains meant that there was not a sufficient amount of time for households to recover or develop the reserves to endure two successive rain failures.

Into the end of the first quarter of 2011, commercial cereals prices began to increase substantially. Not so much in the major producing areas, but in remote non-agricultural areas where households purchase or barter livestock for cereals, price increases of up to almost 200 per cent were recorded. Consequently, households required more money to buy

the same amount of grain. For example, the barter price of a 50 kg sack of maize increased from one to two goats, to three to four goats. This was exacerbated by deteriorating livestock conditions and death due to a lack of water and fodder, meaning the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists had fewer goats to barter and the goats had little market value.

Conflict (both political and resource-based) tends to be an acute factor that causes immediate displacement and loss of household means to access food. But the impact conflict has on trade and the flow of basic food items further exacerbates consumer market prices.

... The current crisis is not a single event that ends when the rains come. A determined commitment needs to be made not only to saving the lives of millions of people that are in crisis, but to restoring and rebuilding the economic livelihoods of the people in crisis ... [and] looking at ways in which appropriate and people-centred technology can be used to make sure that affected populations are able to adapt and cope with the next two to three seasons of failed rains.

PR: Your role in Somalia is to coordinate aid efforts and disseminate information so that NGOs aren't overlapping in their work. Donors are increasingly concerned that their money is being used wisely; how does the UN/WFP help ensure that's the case?

MG: To ensure that assistance is effectively used, coordination and the exchange of information is critical. Within the UN, humanitarian system clusters are formed to act as a forum for the information to be compiled and analyzed, looking at areas of under humanitarian coverage (gaps). The cluster leaders also act as facilitators between donors such as the Canadian government and agencies on the ground that are providing food assistance to see if agency support can be increased in these gap areas. At the same time, coordination allows different responses to become complementary.

The exchange of information in complex emergencies is sensitive and the cluster tries to promote an environment of confidentiality while still allowing detailed response information to be exchanged. It is not an easy compromise and has daily challenges. ■

Amy MacLachlan is the Record's senior writer. Mark Gordon is the son of Knox College principal Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon and Rev. Noel Gordon.

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From the Moderator

Extravagant Giving

GOD USES OUR GIFTS TO WORK IN THE WORLD. BY RICK HORST

"When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send them away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They said to him, 'We have only five loaves here and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.'"

—Matthew 14:15-18

A popular term these days in the world of fundraising is "donor fatigue." Apparently, it's a condition from which we suffer when we're asked too often to be generous. Well, I don't know about you, but I find that being generous can actually be kind of exhilarating. I also remember that I learned about it way back in Sunday school.

The world has spent the past few months trying to come to terms with the scale of East Africa's famine. It is, admittedly, something difficult for us Canadians to fathom too readily. In my neck of the woods, I've missed the occasional stop sign because of the season's massive corn crop (or at least that's the story that I'm sticking with). Everywhere I look, from supermarket to farm gate vendor, the choice of delectables is outstanding. No doubt, this year's pumpkin will suffer the same fate as last year's: either a compost pile or a vandal's roadside smashing. Such a reality is, of course, unimaginable in the Horn of Africa.

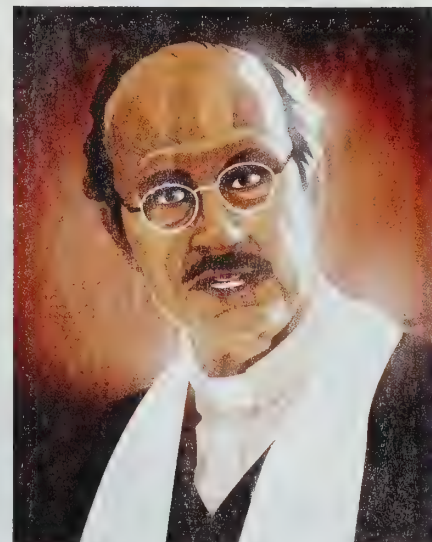
I suppose we sometimes get to feeling that what we have to offer is not very

helpful. We quickly look toward those whom we consider to be wealthier than ourselves and we think, "Couldn't they just give a little more?" And then along comes a biblical reminder that God's math is way beyond our simple calculations. When the disciples saw that the listening crowd of thousands was hungry, their bright plan was to send them all away to the neighbouring villages to

IF FAITH AS SMALL
AS A MUSTARD
SEED CAN LIFT A
MOUNTAIN INTO
THE SEA,
IMAGINE WHAT A
FEW LOAVES AND
FISHES CAN DO

search for food. Jesus, on the other hand, saw a teachable moment. "You give them something to eat," he told them. "Out of what vast storehold?" they must have questioned. But that's Jesus' message, isn't it? It's not about vast storeholds. If faith as small as a mustard seed can lift a mountain into the sea, imagine what a few loaves and fishes can do. And if a few loaves and fishes can feed 5,000, imagine what extravagant generosity can achieve!

But it starts with seeing that what we give is not a token or a tax break or something we won't miss, but a sacrament of ourselves, a portion of what was



once in our hands which can be better used in the hands of a sister or brother. Whether it nourishes a homeless person, or a forgotten resident of a distant indigenous community, or a malnourished child in Africa, the legacy is the same: God uses your gift for something that only God's Spirit can achieve, and it is a holy thing. The simple act of offering your gift, no matter its size, in the name of the One who gave himself for us all, is the opportunity for God to work powerfully through you. And imagine the joy in sharing the leftovers! ■

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Dr. Rick Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

Ministry Opportunities

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Summerside, P.E.I., Summerside; Interim Moderators Rev. Mark Buell, RR 1, Belle River, PE C0A 1B0; mwbuell@ihis.org and Rev. Andrew Hutchinson, 18 Edgehill Terrace, Stratford, PE C1B 2V4; atgh@bellaliant.net.

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Transitions, Ordinations & Inductions

St. Paul's, Mission, B.C.; Rebecca Simpson was ordained and inducted as minister of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Mission, B.C., on Sept. 18, 2011 by the Presbytery of Westminster.

Obituaries

Congram, Elizabeth Anne (McKinney), died in her 71st year in North York Hospital. Beloved wife of John for 50 years; dear mother of Mark (Raquel), Rob (Karen), Tim (Cindy) and Blair; proud grandmother of Julia, Benjamin, Abigail, Caroline and Lulu. A memorial service was held for Liz at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church, Don Mills, Ont., on Aug. 16, 2001. Despite bravely battling cancer since 1997, she found many parts of her life to enjoy, including time with friends and singing in the church choir. Her kindness and compassion will be missed by all who knew her.

Laing, Crawford E., Dec. 21, 1924–Sept. 4, 2011. Beloved husband of Sheila and father of Roger (Arlene), Alison (Jim) and Kirsteen. Emigrant from Scotland to Canada in 1965 and until recently a member of West Vancouver and Richmond Presbyterian Churches in British Columbia.

Recommended by the Presbytery of Westminster for his skill and competence as an actuary in 1997, Crawford joined our church's pension board. Over the next five years, with persistence, energy, dedication and a sense that God had called and appointed him for such a time as this, Crawford led, motivated and inspired the board. He challenged us to address our mandate and to re-new available resources for the struggle to support, uphold and defend the livelihood of our Lord's retired servants. An actuarial gift from God, he led us with wisdom, courage, patience and compassion. We thank God for his loyalty, industry and sacrifice and pray for blessings on his wife, Sheila and family at this time. We shall miss him, for he was indeed a man of God.

West, Mary Elizabeth (Betty) (nee Wray), July 18, 1931–July 13, 2011. Passed suddenly on Wed. July 13, 2011 just five days before her 80th birthday. Mother of Michael, David (Melodie Besse) and Paul (Margaret Alain) and grandmother of Logan, Sam, Annie, Wyatt and Lorna.

Betty was predeceased by her parents, William Wray and Mary Ann Townsley, her brother, William Wray, her sister, Wilma Watson, her daughter, Susan and her granddaughter, Lina. Survived by her brothers, James Wray (Betty Hawke), Richard Wray (June Butson) and Bert Wray (Helen Findlay), and a number of nieces and nephews.

Betty was a member of St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, Ont. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Teresa Charlton of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Ont., and was held at the Beechwood National Memorial Centre in Ottawa on Mon. July 25, 2011. In lieu of flowers, donations to Epilepsy Canada were made. ■



Trafalgar, Oakville, Ont.

Rev. Kristine O'Brien,
minister at Trafalgar,

enjoyed a 12-week sabbatical last summer. Much of her time was spent gardening, and when she returned this fall, she hosted a sabbatical garden open house. Families from the congregation came to see what she had been growing. Kids pulled purple carrots, admired the enormous sunflowers and dug a whole lot of potatoes! A lemonade stand also helped raise money for Trafalgar's summer BBQ program. Pictured are Joe and Ben Smith.



St Andrew's, Saskatoon, Sask.

Laura Roy, Margaret Dawson, Jackie Behrend, Adela MacDonald, Margaret Mazurkewich and Lesley Bens have a mystery on their hands—and under their needles. Earlier this year, these six women finished a quilt that came to St. Andrew's unfinished 25 years ago. The Women's League of that time preserved and finished the cross-stitched quilt top, but they did not preserve the name of the woman who had begun it. Now that this piece of history has finally been quilted, bound and sold by silent auction, only one question remains: who was the mystery quilter?

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca

Laurel Lea St. Matthew's, Sarnia, Ont.

Janet Neal Stewart (right), pictured here with her sister, Bonnie Arbour and mother, Dorothy Neal, recently continued a family tradition by becoming an elder at Laurel Lea St. Matthew's; she was preceded in the role by her late father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Rev. C. Joyce Hodgson performed the induction, which also welcomed Karen DeLong, Patti Wyville and Randy Klatt to eldership. Welcome, servant leaders!



Nine Mile Creek, P.E.I.

The children of Nine Mile Creek were treated to a daily vacation Bible school this year. The program was led by Dale and Margaret Gallagher, with help from missionary Nicole Henry. To end the week in style, Shrine clown Ken "KooKee" Cooke wowed the kids with balloon animals and magic tricks. From left: Reid Mactadgen, Samuel Burdett, Malcolm MacDonald, Jay MacDonald, Nicholas Molybdenum, Alex Masher, Joe MacEachern, Brett MacDonald and Seth MacKenzie. See our website for more photos.

online extra

VISIT THE PEOPLE AND PLACES SECTION OF OUR WEBSITE to see stories of a special baptism in Wallaceburg, Ont., a vacation Bible school afire with excitement in Baxter, Ont., a Christmas tree trimmed with choir members in Lindsay, Ont., and a successful succession (we hope!) in Abbotsford, B.C.



BY JENNIFER O'FARRELL

Log on to
presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder

Throughout November, watch for these online discussions:

- GAME RULES, SAFETY RULES, AND LAWS
- WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THERE WERE NO RULES?
- GOD'S RULES
- JESUS AND RULES

Dear friends,

My friends like to play many different table games and I imagine that, wherever you live, you have your own favourites. But even for a simple card game like **Go Fish** or **Old Maid**, you must know the rules.

My youngest neighbours enjoy playing the board game **Candy Land** and the noisy, marble-eating **Hungry, Hungry Hippos**. These games are often played using “house rules”—not the rules that came in the game box. If you play at someone else’s house, you may find they have different rules than you do.

I like the silly game **Operation** with its sound effects, or the unpredictable game of pick-up-sticks, or the word game **Scrabble**. I also enjoy **Sorry!** (ages 6+)—one of the first “grown-up” games that I learned—in which I was allowed to aggressively bump others back to Start, “according to the rules.” A similar game, **Aggravation**, offers the opportunity to experience risk and learn perseverance.

The **Trivial Pursuit** knowledge game or the **Pictionary** drawing-and-guessing game are often played by teams and larger groups. When two people want to play a game, there’s always checkers or **Connect 4**. Or you could learn chess or backgammon. At the cottage or ski lodge, it’s fun to play games that require more time like **Mousetrap**, **Jenga**, or **Monopoly** (which can go on for days, if it’s stormy).

By playing games, we learn about rules, taking turns, strategy, and ultimately about others and ourselves. Paraphrasing the Apostle Paul, the great letter-writing encourager, I pray that I have done my best in the game. I have played to the end and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with God ... and not only to me, but to all those who also complete the game. (Based on 2 Timothy 4:7-8, TEV)

EMAIL your questions, comments and thoughts to presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder so we can discuss them in the coming months.

I've often wondered what it is about clear, moonlit nights and coyotes. It seems to have a real spooky effect on them

to shoulder, gazing up the hill to our house. They were yodelling their fool heads off in four-part harmony but it sounded more like a mass choir of a hundred.

Suddenly, the four coyotes stopped yodelling, milled around, sniffed one another and attempted to wag their tails off. Then they bunched together again and began caroling us with even more vigour. The show lasted another five minutes before they trotted off for the island across the lake.

"I have never seen a performance quite like that before," Linda said.

"Neither have I," I said. "It must have been the supermoon."

We live on the shore of Lac La Hache, a magnificent Cariboo lake that is 16 kilometres long and about three kilometres wide. It is usually frozen over from the end of November until the end of April. Once frozen over, all the activity we normally enjoy watching on the lake greatly decreases. The one thing that can change all this is a clear night with a full moon. On those nights, the frozen lake surface seems to become a magnet for coyotes, foxes, otters and even wolves. On occasion it brings out other intoxicated wildlife on screaming Ski-Doos, which kind of ruins it for the more respectable residents. But mostly, it's just us furbearers.

I've often wondered what it is about clear, moonlit nights and coyotes. It seems to have a real spooky effect on them. We have all seen the pictures of a coyote howling at the moon. And it doesn't get more moonlit than during a perigee-syzygy, which if you are not an astronomical nerd is simply called a supermoon. A supermoon is one of those infrequent times when the moon is closest to the earth in its orbit and at the same time full or new. Astronomers tell us this results in a moon that is up to 14 per cent larger and brighter than an average full moon. A supermoon has

been blamed for higher tides, increased earthquake activity and even increased baby births. Any spooky effect the moon has on coyotes has got to be greatly increased during a supermoon.

Or does it? Animal behaviourists studying coyotes and the moon have discovered that the only real effect moonlight has on coyotes is that since coyotes are nocturnal, they rely heavily on visual cues for navigation and yip or howl a lot to coordinate group hunting. So if you dial up the intensity of moonlight, you get more coyote activity, especially hunting activity, and hence more coyote yodelling.

Why is it that we humans so quickly speed shift to the paranormal and the supernatural to try to explain things like coyote howling and such? We seem to have a fascination with the mystical, metaphysical, telepathic, psychic, clairvoyant; stuff like ghosts, spirits, UFOs and such; anything that can't be explained by science or natural observation and yet holds out hope of a spiritual experience. Even our veterinarian, a young man I greatly respect, the other day after examining our dog's dislocated knee said, "I am amazed, I wouldn't expect to see one of these every five years and this week I have diagnosed two of them. It's gotta be the supermoon." I think he was jesting. However, within hours of the 8.9 Japanese earthquake on March 11, which happened within a couple of weeks of the supermoon on March 19, cyberspace was inundated with cybernuts going off about how "certified professional astrologer" Richard Nolle's predictions of a whole host of natural disasters with the coming of the supermoon was bang on.

This preference for the supernatural, paranormal and metaphysical; this new mysticism (or is it spiritualism?) seems to me to be on one hand a demonstration of a great thirst for a

god and on the other hand a huge stumbling block to actually finding one. Many people today crave the mystical and spiritual while at the same time are repelled by the reality of the God of the Bible who becomes flesh, lives among us, saves us from sin and requires of us to become like him in the living out of our lives: "... to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with (our) God" (Micah 6:8).

At a wedding a while back, an acquaintance with whom I studied forest ecology in another life cornered me to talk about spiritual things. She wanted my opinion about trees in old growth forests that she experienced were talking to her. I didn't know what to say. What seems to be craved is an otherworldly spiritual possibility and experience that carries few down-to-earth ethical or moral requirements.

And so the night of the supermoon has me thinking: How do I go about talking about Jesus who is so down to earth and real in what he offers and in what he requires, with folks who are so infatuated with the otherworldly that offers nothing and requires even less? I really don't have an answer, only an observation. When I have dared to tell my story about my journey with Jesus, people have generally listened. I am not sure they have believed me, but they have listened. I think it is because it is my true to life story, not a second-hand story; not something filtered through theology or philosophy; not an attempt at preaching or teaching; just my story with Jesus. People still seem to honour one's story with at least a listening. ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper and Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



The Night of the Supermoon

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES.

BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY FALLS

“What on earth is all that racket?” I muttered.

“In here or out there?” Linda asked.

Addy, our Chesapeake/Lab cross, was growling and spitting, hackles raised, her nose pushed up against the glass patio door. Linda and I were standing on either side of her peering out onto the ice with our noses also pressed against the glass.

“The noise inside is kind of obvious,” I said, scratching the trap door of my Stanfields and squinting out the window.

“Look out on the ice and see for yourself,” Linda said. “It

is two in the morning but it’s as bright as day out there. It’s the night of the supermoon.”

“I can’t see anything except a dark blob on the ice,” I said.

“Best get your glasses, old man,” Linda said. “What’s making the racket is as plain as the nose on your face, and we all know the Webber nose leaves nothing to the imagination.”

I stumbled back to the bedroom to look for my glasses and rejoined Linda and Addy at the patio doors. Out on the snowy ice, illuminated by moonlight that made it seem as light as day, was a quartet of coyotes standing shoulder

continued on page 49

A Masaai woman and her child at a food distribution centre in Kenya. Presbyterian World Service and Development, through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, is distributing grain to households in need of food during the massive famine in East Africa.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BARB SUMMERS, PWS&D



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LIFE DURING THE
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PHOTOGRAPH BY JIMMY HARRIS

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On the Cover: COVER CONTEST WINNER!
By Bill Richer, 81, North Saanich, B.C.



Fay Strang, St. Andrew's, Warkworth, Ont.

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Extending God's Love for Us

WE CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MUCH COMPASSION. BY DAVID HARRIS

A book cataloguing a decade of international medical-scientific achievement and a magazine article challenging the tenets of the Occupy Wall Street protest are not the most likely places one expects to read about compassion.

But at the end of a *Maclean's* essay analyzing various economic factors freely tossed about in stories about Occupy protests, Andrew Coyne observes that "while there is little we can do about inequality at the top, there's quite a lot we can do about inequality at the bottom, mostly by giving poor people more money."

I don't think that was meant simplistically: Coyne cites a National Council of Welfare report that says it would have cost about \$12 billion in 2007 to lift every Canadian out of poverty—about what the country would raise by adding two points back on the HST.

"Alas, that calls upon us to show compassion, rather than resentment; to give, rather than to take," he writes.

Alas, that observation is all too true.

Perhaps it was because I had just finished reading Charles Fensham's wonderful article on p. 25 about missional spirituality. Our calling as Christians to in turn call others to share with them the message of God's love is based on God's persistent, loving and compassionate calling of humanity to be what God intends us to be in creation.

Compassion has two aspects for humans and especially for Christians. The one part, compassion towards those who lack the necessities of life, we address tolerably well: we—you—give generously to many charitable causes, including the church's many outreach projects, whether Presbyterian World Service and Development, Toronto's Evangel Hall or Winnipeg Inner City Missions.



COMPASSION HAS
TWO ASPECTS
FOR HUMANS
AND ESPECIALLY
FOR CHRISTIANS

As members of wider society, though, I wonder if we can do more to make our voice heard when our politicians are less than compassionate in treatment of the homeless in our cities or propose harsher retributive measures for criminals?

The other aspect of compassion has more directly to do with the content of our faith. Jesus warned the church of his day that they were squandering God's generous gift of faith; guarding the laws to such an extent that the compassionate, prophetic words of God had become like buried treasure.

I wonder if we sometimes bury God's loving call to the world under the weight of 500-year-old confessions and politics?

That is a question that Dorcas Gordon addresses in this month's Theology 101 series on Christ alone. As she observes, the church needs courage to rethink some of its formularies. It will not be easy. In fact, she says it may be painful. But it clearly wasn't easy in Jesus' time either.

To the faith leaders of his day, Jesus was a dangerous renegade. He alleged that both the Sadducees and Pharisees were misguided and the Samaritans got off track, too. But their errors didn't mean they were irredeemable; Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and a Samaritan models God's compassion in a parable.

Even the Canaanites, polytheistic neighbours of Israel, were not outside the scope of Jesus' ministry, as the story of the healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter in Matthew and Mark reveals.

Translate those faith groups into contemporary language and Jesus might be talking about Anglicans, Presbyterians and Romans Catholics, and it might be the story of the Good Muslim or the Good Hindu.

Interestingly, startlingly and sadly, no faith groups appear in the recently published book *The Grandest Challenge*. Two physicians, Abdallah Daar and Peter Singer, recount a decade of working to bring the finest scientific researchers to work on some of the most important and challenging problems facing the world's poorest people. In many of those parts of the world, churches have a major presence, yet they appear not to have been involved in finding solutions.

Let's hope that was oversight on all sides. And let this be a call for Christians and other faith groups to find out what they can do to extend God's compassion in a concrete way.

A compassionate God sent His son to be with us so we would know of God's deep love for us. May you experience that love in your lives this Christmas and all year round.

All of us at the *Record* wish you a holy and happy Christmas. ■

David Harris

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

VOLUME CXXXV NO.11, DECEMBER 2011

ISSN 0032-7573

EDITOR **David Harris**

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Published on the first of each month except
August by Presbyterian Record Inc.

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board@presbyterianrecord.ca

ADVERTISING **Fenn Co.**

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Member of Magazines Canada, the Canadian Church Press
and the Associated Church Press.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069388
Registration No. 09634
Postage paid at Mississauga, Ontario.
Return postage guaranteed. Send label only.

We acknowledge the financial support of the
Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical
Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

New Subscription Pricing as of 2012. GST/HST not included.
Every Home Plan: \$22.00
Individual: \$32.00
U.S.A. and foreign: \$42.00 **Single copies:** \$3.95

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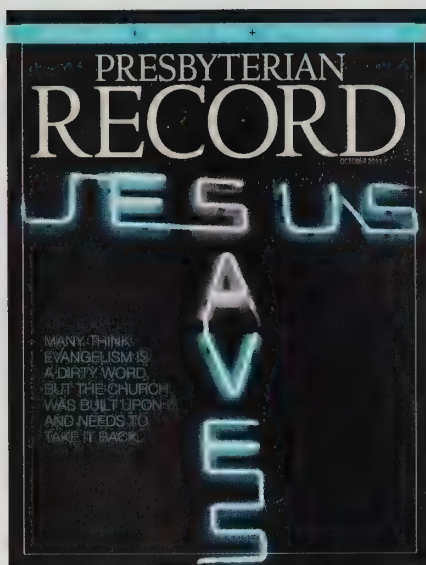
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We Must Share Our Stories

Re Storytelling People, October

I absolutely loved David Webber's article, *Storytelling People*; and because I always read the *Presbyterian Record* from front to back, I did not miss this last article in the October issue. I truly believe that if we share more of our stories with others about how God was present in our lives, about what happened when we turned our lives over to God, etc. etc., it might have a big impact on those around us and who knows? This might even prompt them to want to come and worship with us! So let's share what I call our "God Stuff!" And we need to remember, it doesn't have to be earth shattering. Knowing that God cares about the small things is also reaffirming. Thanks for this good reminder of how important it is to share our dash or hyphen.

JANET CLAPP, WINCHESTER, ONT.

What Our Church Needs

Re Reclaiming Evangelism, October

How refreshing to see the cover story on evangelism. We sideline evangelism in our church life at our peril. The first words of Jesus' ministry were ardently evangelistic and unavoidably personal: "The Kingdom of God is near! Turn from your sins and believe the Good News." (Mark 1:15) This

message remained at the core of Jesus' teaching whether he was speaking to a Pharisee or the woman caught in adultery. We have neglected it.

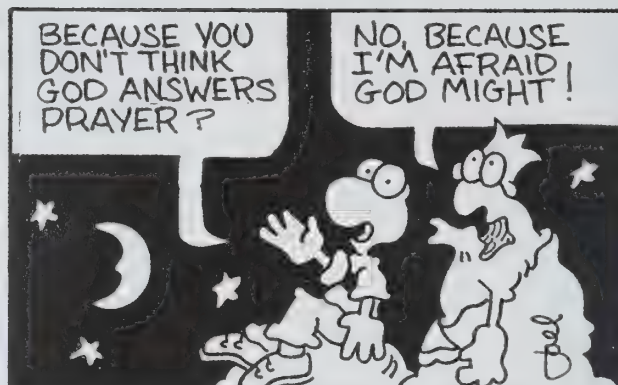
As one who was much involved in congregational evangelism, I was once invited by one of our seminary lecturers to provide some input into a course on evangelism he was going to teach. I put together several pages of material. He replied, "Sorry, but the course is on the history of evangelism."

Why has the Presbyterian Church in Canada so deliberately abandoned its spiritual "nursery?" Why are there so few conversions among us? One reason may be that too many have believed that spiritually empty cliché: show the love of Jesus and if necessary use words. Jesus showed love in healing many people. And they all died eventually. But those who took his words to heart, believed who he was and repented, would live again. This is the part that is the Good News and we have sidelined it.

But our problem is not really about evangelism. It's that we love Jesus too little. But then how can you love someone you do not know and how can you know someone you do not seek? Biblical preaching and teaching can awaken a spiritual hunger and turn comfortable religious people into ➤



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seekers of the rule of Christ in their lives. We actually need to begin to fall in love with God. If we don't really need to turn from our sins and turn to the Lord and love Him, why bother preaching? Nothing eternal is at stake!

I recall a young bank teller who had just received her engagement ring. She counted out my cash for me that day with such a flourish. She was hoping I would notice the ring and ask her about the one whom she had come to love.

I am so thankful for those who pressed home to me with some urgency the primary truths of the only gospel that saves. We have a gospel to be proud of in the PCC. We need to offer practical courses at a seminary level for students who love the Lord and the lost enough to want to learn some of the skills necessary for effective

congregational evangelism. There is also a need to develop a group of people who can lead training workshops at a congregational level. It could be the very means the Lord uses to inject new life and new blood into the PCC.

JAMES STATHAM, SUMMERLAND, B.C.

The Dirty Word

Re We are Called to be Angels, October

David Harris is a very fine editor but I think he needs to learn more about the foundation of our Presbyterian faith by studying the writings of our own best theologians, such as William Klempa and Joseph McLelland. If he did, he would realize that "evangelism" is not the "dirty" word, but the term "evangelical" is. It has long been associated with conservative or fundamentalist Presbyterians, especially in the

United States, and the word has widely narrow connotations.

To add insult to injury, the cover and story is illustrated by a neon "Jesus Saves" in the form of a cross. To me that does not represent the Presbyterian Church, rooted solidly in the Reformed tradition. The *Record* should have chosen the conversation between Norm Grant and Patrick Voo and used a garden tended by and reaching out to all kinds of people.

That was an excellent article and illustrates the true meaning of evangelism. And did you notice? Neither of these used the term "evangelical." By calling the *Record* an "evangelical" magazine, Harris just put us all back into a very narrow and confining box.

M. E. SMART, LINDSAY, ONT.

Thanksgiving Thoughts

I realize that I'm challenging perhaps the most profoundly entrenched societal institution ever faithfully practiced by humanity, but, really, why do so many (fortunate) people every year give thanks to God "for the bounty we are about to receive," all the while a few billion equally deserving folk around the world do not get to receive such bounty? Instead, they receive excruciating hunger pains and/or disease. Collectively, and sadly, so many people believe that God would bless "us" while neglecting "them."

I do not at all believe that God does not care about His creation and

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especially the suffering that infests countless people within; I believe He's allowing humanity what we so crave, indeed insist upon: free will—choice—as did Adam and Eve (whether literal or metaphorical), who chose to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

I perceive humanity, and our often tragic status, as harvesting the bitter produce of its own collective doing, even though innocent people, especially young children, too often unjustly share in the resultant suffering.

FRANK G. STERLE, JR., WHITE ROCK, B.C.

Highlight Homosexuality Issue

Re Sad, Disappointed, Hopeful; Letters, July/August

Whenever I read a letter to the editor regarding the matter of homosexuality, such as the one by Mr. Paul Kokoski in the July/August issue, I am dismayed and also very saddened to learn that there are still people in the Presbyterian Church who prefer to quote ancient biblical texts regarding homosexuality rather than understand that a person does not choose to be gay. This is a fact that the medical community, in particular those in psychiatry, has finally come to understand and accept, no longer considering homosexuality to be reversible.

It would certainly be constructive if such persons as Rev. Calvin Brown, Rev. Laurence DeWolfe, Rev. Glen Davis, the current moderator and others would write articles about this important matter in a more open manner. God will help us all to do what is right and to not be fearful of opening our minds to the truth. Let us ask ourselves, "What would Jesus say?"

SUSAN MACRAE, GLEN HAVEN, N.S.

Baby Steps

Re Beyond Sunday School Faith, and Sola Scriptura, November

Hindus define God only in negative terms: *neti, neti, neti*. Not this, not that, and so on. Buddha refused to even contemplate the question. We cannot define the indefinable.



Benjamin Smith, 7,
Trafalgar, Oakville, Ont.

Tenets, dogmas, theologies and even scriptures are human constructs. Faith is not. This is what Jesus told Nicodemus. These human constructs are only expressions of faith experience. Naturally, they not only differ from person to person and from group to group, but also evolve and must evolve "Beyond Sunday School Faith." We human beings find security in the known and given. To discover the roots of our being we must venture beyond and take a leap of faith into the unknown and make efforts to "see face to face." To start with though, we must have the Sunday school faith.

CLARENCE MCMULLEN, RICHMOND HILL, ONT.

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Christmas Got Run Over by a Reindeer

LUCKILY WE HAVE THE MANGER. BY ANDREW FAIZ



This will be my 40th Christmas in Canada. Our first was spent in the Leaside home of friends from Lahore. It was a modest celebration, filled with surreal wonders, like snow and lights. We went to Eaton's and Simpson's window displays. I don't recall what they were that year; I'm sure it was some brightly coloured toy land masterpiece, with the jolly fat man overseeing a team of little people happily making toys for good girls and boys.

The basics of the season were established then: fellowship, faith and festivities. There might not have been any mall displays in Pakistan, but for a child it was primarily about Father Christmas. Toys, of course, and an excuse to provide some new clothes; as if that couldn't have been done any other time of year. It's all part of the contradiction that is this month.

For two decades my Christmas Eve was spent first at worship and then at a cousin's; half a dozen growing families gathered in a suburban mansion. I played Santa to a generation of second cousins and now I wistfully watch them don the red suit. We created our own tradition; mixing this with that to make something. Our table had curries and rices, as one might expect, along with pastas, turkey and ham. A claim to all the bounties available to us.

The wonder I felt at my first Canadian Christmas I have seen on the faces of children for four decades. Children who have just arrived, once only a week earlier, from away, excited and trepidatious about everything. Two-

and three-year-olds born here, absorbing their legacy of family and of faith. And of our steadily growing wealth.

There was always worship and reflection at our Christmas gathering. My uncle was a minister, and he led

THE HYPOCRISIES
OF FAMILIES ARE
MOST EXPOSED
BY THE PRESSURES
OF THIS SEASON

us with his infectious hopefulness. We remembered the baby in the manger as the reason we had gathered. These were happy evenings that lasted till the wee hours after Santa had come and gone. Lots of laughter and singing and storytelling and eating, filled with the intensity of family.

There were dark moments, as there always are at family gatherings. Accusations, betrayals, back-biting. That, too, is part of the Christmas legacy; that strand of pain that runs through family, that is smoothed over by ... well, by simply ignoring it

usually. Perhaps this is why divorces and breakups spike in December; the hypocrisies of families are most exposed by the pressures of this season.

Christmas hasn't changed radically over the years. It is still this confused and complicated mixture of family, faith and commerce; equal parts *Oh Come All Ye Faithful* and *Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer*. You cannot untie one from the other. For most of us, Christmas would not be complete without a visit from Charlie Brown or George Bailey or Dylan Thomas.

How rich it is to be human! A messy wonder, really. There is nothing to do but enjoy the spoils of this season, the parties, the punches, the presents. I don't know if the madness that is this month actually grew out of celebrating Christ's birth or is somehow coincidental to it, and has globbed on to it as an excuse to whitewash the excessiveness. I must call a cultural historian and ask one day. I do know, you can't run away from the Christmas-crazy; believe me, I've tried.

It's not about running or about disingenuously wailing against consumerist excesses while contributing to them. No, it's about finding that quiet little space in your life where you can go to the manger for a moment and sit in meditation. It is the only defence we have against the noise—and don't fool yourself, the rest is nothing but noise. So, it is a good thing we have the manger. ■

Andrew Faiz is the Record's managing editor. He is currently on sabbatical.



Soldiers from the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry carry First World War soldier, Pte. Alexander Johnston to his burial in France. Sgt. William MacDougall, a piper from the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, played during the ceremony. More on our website.

Presbyterian Soldier Laid to Rest

HAMILTON CHURCH AIDS IN SEARCH TO IDENTIFY UNKNOWN SOLDIER. BY MARGARET SAMBOL

ON SEPT. 29, 1918, A YOUNG PRESBYTERIAN soldier died on a battlefield in Northern France. Almost 90 years later in July 2008 his skeletal remains were discovered by a construction crew surveying for a new factory. The only clue to his identity were small maple leaf-shaped collar tags found with his body, which identified him as serving with the 78th battalion out of Winnipeg. In 2011, he was finally buried in a cemetery next to the field where he fought and died.

With the help of professional and volunteer genealogists across Canada and some forensic anthropology, the unknown soldier's only living relative who still carried the mitochondrial DNA necessary for a positive identification was found in Don Gregory of Ottawa. The soldier was identified as his grand-uncle, Pte. Alexander Johnston of Hamilton, Ont.

Pte. Johnston was laid to rest in a full military funeral on Oct. 25 in France's Le Cantimpré Canadian Cemetery in Sailly-lez-Cambrai, less than one kilometre from where his remains were found.

Don Gregory's daughter, Cpl. Ann Gregory, a 26-year reservist herself, played the *Last Post* at the burial, while Sgt. William MacDougall, a member at St. Andrew's, Ottawa, was the piper at the ceremony.

Charles Deogratias, a Presbyterian chaplain with the Department of National Defence, says the funeral service was a profound experience.

"The church was packed with French people in solidarity with Canadians," Deogratias said. "It was a community event. They treat Canadians with incredible dignity."

Born in Coatbridge, Scotland, in

1885, Johnston came to Canada with his family at age 26. He settled in Hamilton and likely attended Laidlaw Presbyterian Church, which later became Laidlaw Memorial United Church.

On Sept. 4, 1918 he began fighting with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in France. He survived only three weeks on the front lines, but he fought in three major battles in 15 days during the Hundred Days Offensive, which led to the end of the war.

"The odds were astronomical against it happening, but every single thing came together to end with this ceremony," Don Gregory said. "I can still hardly believe it myself. Somebody up there was organizing it." ■

Margaret Sambol is a freelance writer living in Kanata, Ont.

Community News

CIDA Refuses to Fund Kairos

KAIROS HAS BEEN DENIED GOVERNMENT funding for the second time, a choice executive director Mary Corkery calls “a pretty sound rejection of Kairos’ work.”

In a letter dated Sept. 22, 2011, the Canadian International Development Agency rejected an application for \$6 million that the social justice group had submitted 18 months before, saying the proposal had been “extensively reviewed” and was “deemed to not adequately demonstrate value for money in terms of concrete results on the ground.”

CIDA abruptly rejected the group’s last application with a phone call on Nov. 30, 2009—the day their bridge funding expired. Adding to the controversy, a document later attained by the media through the Access to Information Act revealed that the president and vice-president of CIDA, as well as Bev Oda, minister of international cooperation, had signed the document meant to approve Kairos’ request for \$7-million in funding, but the word “not” had been inserted into the recommendation in handwriting, effectively denying the funding instead. Oda later admitted the “not” had been added at her discretion.

“It was political. It was a government decision not to fund Kairos,” Mary Corkery said. When asked if she suspected the recent rejection was similarly motivated, she said: “I expect that it is certainly influenced in that way.”

Corkery said Kairos had not ruled out applying to CIDA again in the future, but had no plans to do so anytime soon.

“I think that the really important thing is that there’s a difference in values,” she said. “When the letter of our second rejection says, we believe that it’s not good value for money and



Presbyterian Church Moderator Rick Horst (front left) and members of the TRC Commission place a copy of the PCC’s 1994 Confession to Aboriginal Peoples into a bentwood box at the national Truth and Reconciliation event in Halifax in October. The box is a tribute to children who attended Indian residential schools in Canada.

says nothing more, and when the first letter focused on the fact that CIDA funds worked as efficient and effective, you’ve got a very broad stroke that says you’re not funded. And it also says your values and our values don’t match. We think that’s the point.”

Kairos is an ecumenical organization supported by the Presbyterian Church in Canada and 10 other church groups. ■—CW

Hospitality and the Holocaust

MORE THAN 150 CHRISTIANS AND JEWS worshipped together at St. Andrew’s,

Humber Heights, Toronto, on Nov. 13th as part of Holocaust Education Week organized by the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Toronto. The highlight of the service was the personal testimony given by Holocaust Survivor Claire Baum. Born in Rotterdam, Holland just prior to World War II, Claire was only five years old when she and her younger sister were placed in a stranger’s home by their father in an attempt to hide them from the Nazis. For three years, Claire and her sister were raised as Christians under the care of a courageous 26-year-old woman.

When the war ended, Claire shared that some rescuers did not want to give their foster Jewish children up—even when their parents had survived. And, due to a law passed by the Dutch government in 1945, they didn't have to. However, Claire and her sister were returned to their parents by their rescuer without reservation.

Holland's Jewish population before the war totaled 110,000 of which only 20,000 survived. Of the 3,500 Jewish children who went into hiding, only 1,500 survived.

St. Andrew's hosted the event as part of a larger theme the congregation is exploring in 2011-2012 focused on hospitality. A book study (*Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* by Christine Pohl) is transforming the way we understand hospitality—it's not about entertaining friends and family, but about offering persons disconnected from the world a safe place where relationships can be transformed. Listening to the testimony of a Holocaust Survivor reminded us as a church just how critical it is for our identity and living witness to reclaim the radical Christian practice of hospitality. ■ —Rev. Paul Kang, *St. Andrew's, Humber Heights*

Missionary Honoured

DELEGATES FROM TAIWAN'S ALETHEIA University (formerly Oxford College) visited Oxford County, near Woodstock, Ont., in October to celebrate the school's 130th anniversary and remember the Canadian gift that made it possible.

Oxford College was Taiwan's first institute of higher learning and among Canada's first overseas development projects. It was founded in 1881 by George Leslie Mackay, the first overseas missionary commissioned by the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Mackay is also remembered for founding two churches and, in 1882, Taiwan's first hospital.

The eight-person delegation was from the North Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Their Canadian visit began in Oxford County with a

Faith Leaders Declare Climate Change a Moral Issue

AN ECUMENICAL GROUP OF FAITH LEADERS CAME TOGETHER in Ottawa in October to address the issue of climate change.

The event, which was organized by the Canadian Council of Churches, focused on the Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action on Climate Change. This letter declares climate change to be "symptomatic of a spiritual deficit" that is manifested in "excessive self interest, destructive competition and greed."

PCC moderator Rev. Dr. Rick Horst was among the 26 leaders of faith communities and faith-based organizations who signed the document. The leaders affirmed that their faith traditions call upon them to address climate change as a moral issue.

The letter was written for the UN Climate Change Conference being held in Durban, South Africa from Nov. 28 to Dec. 9. It urges political leaders to commit to "climate justice," sustainability, and a binding international agreement to reduce carbon emissions. ■ —*Canadian Council of Churches*

screening of *The Black-Bearded Barbarian*, a documentary about Mackay, and an evening service at Knox, Woodstock. Three days in Toronto followed, during which they visited Mackay's granddaughters, saw artifacts the missionary donated to the Royal Ontario Museum in 1893, and met with their sister synod, Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda, at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre.

Winston Weni-yi Chen, the director general of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Toronto, spoke about Mackay at the anniversary service.

"One hundred and thirty years ago, he brought a new education," he said. "In Taipei City, one of the biggest hospitals is named after him. That means his name is repeated every single day." ■ —*EW with files from the Woodstock Sentinel-Review and Taiwan Church News.*

Helping Clergy Cope

SPIRITUAL LEADERS GATHERED IN Oakville, Ont., in November for a special event to raise awareness about mental illness. "Caring for the Whole Flock: How to see and help those with mental illness" was aimed at clergy and lay caregivers and offered information on depression, addictions and suicide.

The event was the result of a partnership between Trafalgar Presbyterian

Church, the Ontario Mental Health Association (Halton Region Branch) and Oakview Funeral Home. Rev. Kristine O'Brien, minister at Trafalgar said, "We know that 40 per cent of those who seek help to deal with mental illness go to their religious leader first. As clergy, we need to be prepared to respond appropriately."

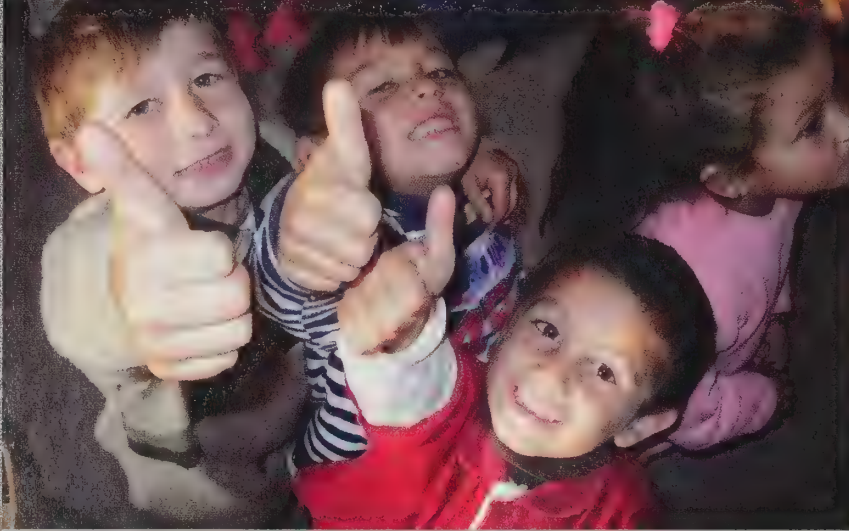
The morning was led by Dr. Sandra Moll, a member of the Trafalgar congregation, and Dr. Joyce Tryssenaar. Both are from the McMaster University School of Rehabilitation Science and have extensive training in mental health education. Moll urged pastors to help their congregations find ways of offering genuine welcome to those who are suffering. "Churches can offer acceptance to people who feel excluded. Finding that is a big step on the road to healing."

Jenna Masciantonio, communications coordinator for CMHA Halton also shared details on how clergy can access helpful resources. Information about mental health education programs across the country are available on their website, cmha.ca. ■ —*Trafalgar, Oakville*

Sign Blitz for Poverty Continues

A SIGN BLITZ THAT ENCOURAGED faith communities to display lawn signs

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urging Ontarians to “vote for a poverty-free Ontario” has shifted to “working toward a poverty-free Ontario.” Churches are being asked to obtain signs from the Inter-Faith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC), a provincial, inter-faith coalition established in the 1980s.

The campaign was a partnership between ISARC and the Social Planning Network of Ontario, and was part of ISARC’s Faith to End Poverty Campaign, launched back in June. They’re now holding Meet and Greet sessions in municipalities across Ontario for faith leaders and others to welcome MPPs and to remind them about Ontario’s low-income neighbourhoods.

“We encourage churches to contact us, and tell us their stories, joining others to help reduce poverty in Ontario,” said Marlene Buwalda-Liao, the Presbyterian Church’s ISARC representative, and member at Knox, Bracebridge, Ont. ■ —AM

Presby Minister Gets New Job

REV. DR. DANIEL D. SCOTT will be taking a year-long leave of absence from his professorship at Tyndale University College in Toronto to serve as managing director at Save the Mothers, an organization training professionals from developing countries to improve maternal and child health.

Scott will oversee Canadian operations and fundraising activities to expand the program, currently based in Uganda, to other parts of the world with high maternal mortality rates.

“More than 1,400 women die every single day during pregnancy and childbirth. That is staggering and preventable,” Scott told the *Record* in an email. “Save the Mothers is providing innovative leadership for maternal and child health. My job is to find donors who will give generously, advocates who will share the vision, and partners who have common goals.”

During his leave, Scott will maintain his duties as minister at St. John’s, Bradford, Ont. ■ —AM with files from *Save the Mothers*



Kalman Kovacs passed away in October.

Remembering a Dear Friend

ON OCT. 8TH, 2011, THREE CHURCH families celebrated the life and witness of Kalman Kovacs. In Edmonton, two worshipped together in English and Hungarian: Strathcona, his home church where he had been an elder for almost 25 years and the organist and music director for over 30, and Calvin Hungarian, where he was an honorary member and elder. Seven time zones to the east, bells tolled at the Reformed Church of Berettyóúfalu, Hungary, where he had been a faithful son despite Communist rule. All three congregations experienced his profound spirituality and shared his gifts of music.

Born in 1943 in Szeged, Hungary, Kalman showed musical passion at an early age, studying at the music conservatory college at the age of 14. A gifted trumpet and piano player, he began teaching at 19, and later became the principal of the school. It was there he met Judit, his wife of 37 years. By 25, Kalman had become superintendent of all music schools in the province.

Eventually the young couple left Communist Hungary in search of a new life in the West. With great good fortune, the Kilgour family met them on their arrival in Edmonton in 1975. It marked the beginning of a rich journey as the

families learned from each other and the children grew up together.

Kalman supported Judit and their four children by teaching music privately 40 hours a week for 11 years, and directed several choirs. He used these music lessons to reach out to young people. A former piano student confided, "Sometimes we just talked instead of me playing my songs for him. I learned so much from him ... Kalman had a great impact on many lives."

Most Saturdays, a stream of students arrived at Strathcona. Families paid what they could afford. Kalman learned from his parents' example to live with faith and integrity, and he conducted his life and work with honesty and devotion.

Rev. Jean Bryden said Kalman took seriously the pastoral role of the eldership and had been unfailingly supportive in session and on the worship team. His service also included serving on the Assembly Council from 2001-2004.

"In the last few months, Kalman always maintained that he was completely at peace and God was very close to him. Even as cancer took its toll on his body, he said, he felt his spirit growing stronger and healthier."

■ —David and Laura Kilgour, and Catherine Kovacs. Read the full-length version of this personal tribute at presbyterianrecord.ca.

Staff Exchange

ON NOV. 14TH, STAFF AT CHURCH offices participated in an exchange with staff at the offices of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, located in Burlington, Ont. For one day, a Toronto delegation spent time in Burlington learning, sharing and getting to know their Christian brothers and sisters, while staff at 50 Wynford welcomed CRCNA staff into their midst.

In 2009, both denominations adopted the Affirmation of the Relationship, which states: "We celebrate the many facets of shared ministry between our denominations over the last several years ... [and] we look forward to developing together new horizons of mission which respond to Christ's calling to the church today."

In response to this affirmation, there has been an on-going dialogue with a Canadian group from the CRCNA named by their Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee to meet with a group from the PCC's Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee. The two groups are continually looking for new ways to live out the relationship.

The Christian Reformed Church in North America is a bi-national denomination with congregations in the United States and Canada. For more on the relationship, visit presbyterian.ca/partners/crcna. ■ —AM

World News will return next month.

Calling all Canadian Presbyterian Seminary Students

Rev. Dr. DeCoursey Rayner was the editor of the *Presbyterian Record* from 1958-1977. An annual contest in his name is sponsored by Armour Heights Presbyterian Church, Toronto. This year, your Rayner Prize challenge is to take one of your essays or assignments from this academic year and convert it into an 800-word magazine article, written in the popular voice.

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EMAIL YOUR ENTRY AS AN ATTACHMENT AND IN THE BODY OF THE EMAIL TO REV. BILL MIDDLETON, BMIDDLETON@ARMOURHEIGHTS.ORG, AND TO THE RECORD, AFAIZ@PRESBYTERIAN.CA.

We look forward to reading your articles! Good luck!

Kitsch Christmas Gifts

SOMETHING UNIQUE FOR THAT SPECIAL SOMEONE ON YOUR LIST. BY BRADLEY CHILDS

KNICK-KNACKS

What could be better than giving a little Santa Claus statue to your loved ones this Christmas? Ok, so maybe a baby Jesus statue would be better. Now you can have the best of both worlds. Catholic Supply is offering a nice little piece: Santa Claus visiting the baby Jesus at the manger!

FIND IT @ catholicsupply.com/christmas/kneelsanta.html

CLOTHING

Christian companies love to take copyrighted materials from huge corporations and make slight adjustments that will appeal to Christians (like those silly t-shirts that say, "Got Jesus" instead of "Got Milk"). But there has been one article of clothing Jesus just hasn't managed to work himself onto—until now! Underwear! We all wear 'em... uh... hopefully. Anyhoo, if you happen to be someone who might find this a good gift for the wife, you can now buy Jesus and Mother Mary briefs.

FIND IT @ Search cafePress.ca for "Jesus underwear"

BALLOONS

What's that you say? "What if I'm really wealthy and I need to find that perfect gift for the hot air balloonist in my life?" Worry no more, because the good folks at Kubicek Balloons have a full-sized hot air balloon in the shape of a cathedral. How better to share your faith with your town or city than to fly a giant church overhead?

FIND IT @ kubicekballoons.cz/english/products/specials.php

MUSIC

If you have a Christian female guitar player in the family, I've got something for you. Luna Guitars creates beautiful stringed instruments, particularly with women in mind. They are light, built with necks that are easier for smaller hands to chord, and are contoured to fit a feminine torso. And ... Luna makes the Trinity. It's a dreadnought body with an inlay-filled trinity symbol around the sound hole... and it has Celtic neck inlays to boot.

FIND IT @ lunaguitars.com ■

Rev. Bradley Childs is minister at First, Regina.

Planting Seeds of Hope for Generations to Come

How Planned Gifts Are Growing the Church and Its Mission



Photo credit: Herb Gale

Bethel Church in Scotsburn, Nova Scotia, is filled with the sights and sounds of an increasing number of children at play. After receiving \$5,000 to start an endowment fund for Christian Education, Bethel invited others to help grow the fund with gifts from their assets, especially gifts of stock. Soon the congregation had raised over \$100,000, and in the years following has received an additional \$80,000 in bequests and cash donations.

The annual income from the fund has enabled them to hire a part-time CE worker who oversees a new mid-week children's ministry.



What will your legacy be ...

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www.presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving

Doing What Churches Should

PRESBYTERIAN CHAPLAIN JOINS PROTEST MOVEMENT IN TORONTO. **BY ERIN WOODS**

It is Oct. 16, 2011. Protesters involved in the fledgling Occupy Toronto movement are meeting to plan a march through downtown, and are using a communication process called Open Space Technology (OST). The process uses agenda-free meetings and hand signals to achieve consensus.

It isn't working.

OST is new and awkward for this first-time gathering. The Occupy Toronto group has no leaders—a deliberate decision, but one that makes it difficult to streamline the process right now. Some activists are feeling left out.

When the meeting turns into a screaming match, one member of the crowd steps forward. He is wearing a robe and stole over his blue jeans, and his voice is calm. His name is Rafael Vallejo, and he calls himself a protest chaplain. That afternoon, he marches hand in hand with one of the activists who had been threatening to leave the protest.

The Occupy movement became a worldwide phenomenon this fall. In an interview with the online show, *What's Trending*, *Adbusters'* senior editor Micah White called it the "American autumn" in response to the "Arab spring." Inspired by the Arab protesters and by the acampados who staged general assemblies across Spain last May, *Adbusters* put out a call in July for 20,000 Americans to set up camp on Wall Street and protest against the corporate control of western democracy. Occupy Wall Street began on Sept. 17 and soon sparked imitation gatherings in hundreds of locations worldwide, including more than a dozen cities in Canada.

Vallejo, a graduate of Toronto's Knox College, was inspired by the Occupy phenomenon. "I am beginning to be persuaded that the young people at 'Occupy' are doing what

churches should be doing, except that they do not use Christian words," he says. "They are acting collectively to be a conscience for civil society."

'Sometimes you see us leading worship or prayer vigils ... Other times we are teachers talking about the way of Jesus and God's dream for the world'

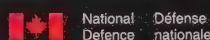
Vallejo first heard of the Protest Chaplains from Anne Howard, whose piece *Jesus on Wall Street* was published in the Beatitudes Society newsletter. The chaplains Howard wrote of were Harvard Divinity School students who attended the Occupy Wall Street protests wearing white acolyte albs and carrying a cardboard cross. Their

group has since grown to include leaders and students of other denominations and faiths, all committed to social justice and to supporting the people who are protesting corporate greed.

The Protest Chaplains idea spread to other cities nearly as quickly as the Occupy movement itself did. The group's official blog seeks members who "can find common ground with anyone, don't always speak Christianese, find holiness in the everyday, and have enough grit to keep their heads in chaos." It discourages members from proselytizing: "That's not OK. That's not what chaplains do."

So what do the chaplains do?

"The short answer is they do different things depending on where they are and what their context is," says Vallejo. He got in touch with the original Protest Chaplains group the day before Occupy Toronto began and asked permission to set up a Toronto chapter. The group had a Facebook page by that night. "Sometimes you see us ➤



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Canada



Rafael Vallejo, lay pastor of Queen Street East and founder of Toronto's Protest Chaplains, speaks with police officers in front of St. James Cathedral on October 15.

leading worship or prayer vigils ... Other times we are teachers talking about the way of Jesus and God's dream for the world. There have also been times that

we act as contemplative leaders inviting people into the silence so they can hear what God is saying to them."

Mainly, Vallejo says, the goal

of the Protest Chaplains is to "do theology on the ground, to share the pain of the protesters... [and] to accompany them on their journey." If that sounds a little vague, it's in keeping with the spirit of Occupy as a whole. The movement is deliberately leaderless, agenda-free and open to all forms of activism, as long as they are non-violent and do not discriminate against any particular group. The lack of focus has frustrated some, but the majority of protesters are determined not to narrow their scope.

"We are not the 99 per cent," one Toronto protester observed at a Nov. 5 meeting. "We are one per cent of the 99 per cent." Other protesters wiggled their fingers in the air, an OST signal indicating agreement. As the representative voices of a multitude, the group agreed, they should not silence even a single voice.

Still, the rest of the 99 per cent—including the church—is not always comfortable with the protests.

"I think people, in general, and churches in particular, are reluctant to offer support to something that they do not quite understand," Vallejo says. "'Occupy' is telling us a different narrative. It operates on a different model of organization that we are not used to... And for some people this whole thing looks scruffy on the edges! But that must be how the *ochlos*, the people who followed Jesus around in Mark's gospel, must have looked like."

Vallejo and the other Protest Chaplains are eager to continue the mission and witness they have begun in occupied cities worldwide. While they recognize that not all churches have chosen to support the movement, they encourage them to consider such political engagement a spiritual responsibility.

"God is doing a new thing in our world," says Vallejo. "Some of us are beginning to see it!" ■

Erin Woods is the Record's editorial assistant and student writer.

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Letter from the Presbytery of Northern Saskatchewan

Working to be One

A COMMITMENT TO ECUMENISM BENEFITS COMMUNITIES ON THE PRAIRIES. **BY AMANDA CURRIE**

IN THE FIRST CENTURY, WHEN PAUL wrote to the Corinthian Christians about the church as "one body with many members," he had no idea of the differences and divisions that would fragment the church centuries later.

It's not difficult for us to apply the metaphor of the church as the body to our congregations. We recognize the different gifts that are shared within our church communities—preaching, teaching, administration, music, hospitality, prayer, evangelism—and we learn to value them and to acknowledge their importance for the healthy functioning of the church as a whole.

But what if this metaphor is meant to apply to the whole church throughout the world? John's gospel indicates that it was Jesus himself who first prayed for the unity of the church: "I ask... on behalf of those who will believe in me... that they may all be one... so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:20-21)

In its report to the 123rd General Assembly, the Ecumenical Relations Committee said: "We affirm one church, one faith, one Lord, sharing in worship, witness and service to the world. As part of the Church Universal, we strive to listen to and learn from one another, to break down the barriers which divide people and to promote justice and peace in the whole human family..."

Although most congregations and ministers might agree with the ecumenical goal in theory, actual sharing with our Christian neighbours often gets pushed aside because of the many demands on our church leaders.

On the Prairies, the churches have a long history of working together, and the members of the Presbytery of Northern Saskatchewan have inherited a great

legacy of involvement and relationship with our Christian friends. Not only do we participate in local ministerials and councils of churches, but as a presbytery we are one of seven sponsoring denominations of the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism in Saskatoon.

The purpose of the Centre is "to be an instrument for Christian reconciliation and unity." Along with representatives from Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, and numerous Protestant denominations, Gerri Madill and Rev. Amanda Currie serve as the Presbyterian representatives on the Board of the PCE.

A recent example of the Saskatoon churches coming together was the 2010 Advent Campaign for the Good Food Junction grocery store. It may sound strange, but there is a "food desert" in the middle of Saskatoon. All the regular grocery stores have moved to more profitable areas of the city, leaving the inner city neighbourhoods without a full service grocery store for the last 12 years.

A community initiative to build a co-operative grocery store with healthy, affordable food previously received provincial funding, but when the government changed, the funding was pulled. The community hoped to continue with the plan, so they reached out to the churches for help.

Church leaders from 10 denominations wrote and publicly signed a letter of support for the project. Through announcements in our churches and a YouTube video (search for "GFJ initiative"), we encouraged people to offer support through prayers, practical assistance, and fundraising to equip the store.

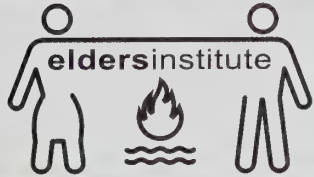
The Advent Campaign raised about \$150,000, prompting other large donations from the community. The groundbreaking took place in July 2011, and

this Advent the churches are promoting the project once more to make sure the store is fully equipped when it opens in the summer of 2012.

Here on the prairies, Presbyterians are not big, and we're not flashy, but we have unique gifts to offer to the wider church that are appreciated and valued by our ecumenical partners. We each have a responsibility to offer our gifts in co-operation with the one body—so that the world may believe. ■

Amanda Currie is clerk of the Presbytery of Northern Saskatchewan, and minister at St. Andrew's, Saskatoon.

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Faithfully Serving

Updates from the **Life & Mission Agency**

www.presbyterian.ca/lma

December 2011

1-800-619-7301 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7



Merry Christmas!!

From all of the LMA staff at national offices and on behalf of the Life and Mission Agency Committee, we wish we wish you and yours a very blessed Advent and a very merry Christmas season. Our prayers are with those who are travelling and with those who struggle at this time of year. God Bless.

Equipping For...

The quarterly PCPak, containing valuable resources and information, has been mailed to each congregation.

In addition to the mailing, all of the EquippingFor articles have been posted online at www.equippingfor.ca.

At the EquippingFor website, you can also subscribe to email updates for each of the five categories so that you never miss out!

Call for Photos!!!

We have already begun the planning for the 2013 PCC wall calendar. Our chosen theme is:

WORSHIP: Celebrating Presbyterian Diversity

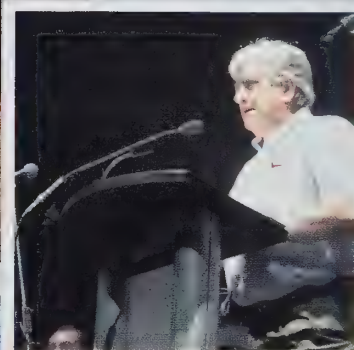
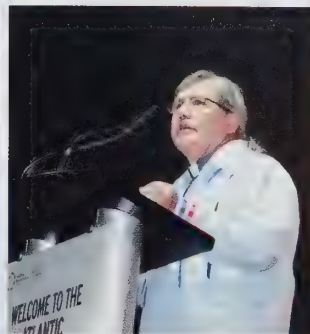
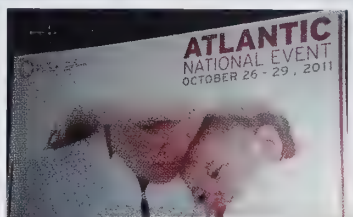
If your worship experience is unique in some way - or if yours is an example of "traditional" Presbyterian worship, we would love to receive a photo of worship in progress.

In particular, we are looking for unique worship spaces, diverse sacrament experiences, cultural & linguistic diversity,

Submit photos & ideas to:
communications@presbyterian.ca

LMA Committee

The Life and Mission Agency Committee met last month at Crieff Hills Community. A summary of the meeting can be found on the Life and Mission Agency web page.



This month's photos are from the TRC National Event in Halifax

Mission Blogs

Each of our overseas mission staff now have a blog where you can follow along as they work to proclaim Christ as representatives of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

presbyterian.ca/missionstaff

2012 Calendar

The 2012 wall calendar is now available for order from the Bookroom. The theme for 2012 is "**Go. Learn. Serve.**" highlighting just some of the many mission trips and experiences available to Presbyterians.

presbyterian.ca/calendar

Canada Youth 2012

The PCC's national youth conference takes place at Brock University from July 3-8, 2012.

Registration is now open. Visit the website for details about the event and registration information.

canadayouth.ca



Theology 101

The 16th-century Reformers—Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox and others—were derisively nicknamed, “the Sola-ists.” They distilled the essence of the gospel in five Latin slogans using the word *sola*, meaning only, solely or exclusively: *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *sola scriptura*, *solo Christo*, *solī Deo gloria* (grace alone, faith alone, scripture alone, Christ alone, to God’s glory alone). But, are we still sola-ists today?

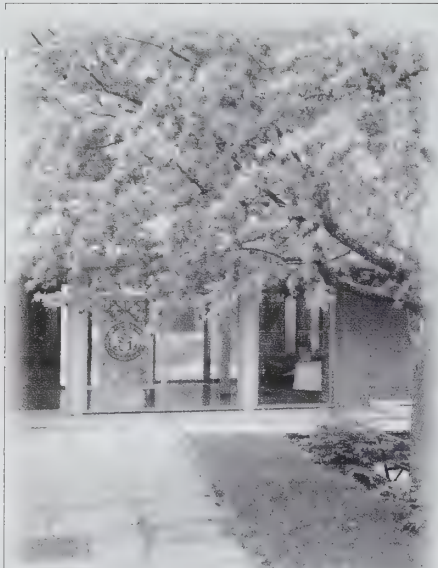
Donald MacLaren, 72, St. James’, Truro, N.S.

Christ Alone

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN THE MIDST OF COMPLEX AND DIVERSE RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS?
BY DORCAS GORDON

In July, I spent a week in Israel/Palestine where my days were filled with greetings of *shalom* and *salaam*. This is a world filled with linguistic and religious diversity: geographically small, where the three monotheistic Abrahamic faiths seek to live faithfully in a charged political, social and historical context. What does Christ alone mean in such a context?

On the plane home I began working on a course on John’s gospel that I taught later in the summer in Havana, Cuba. Cuba, a secular context, yet one in which over 50 evangelical/protestant religious groups, not to mention Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Baha’i among others, are registered with the Office of Religious Affairs, which is directly connected to the ideological ➤



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Rev. Dr. Dale Woods
Director of Pastoral Studies
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Rev. Dr. John Vissers, Principal
Presbyterian College Montreal

Ministry With the Dying and Grieving

Dr. Shuling Chen, Chaplain and
Director of Educational Programmes
Presbyterian College Montreal

You, Your Congregation, and the End of the Word: Reclaiming Biblical Apocalyptic for the Pulpit

Dr. Brian Irwin
Knox College



info@presbyteriancollege.ca

section of the Communist party. This is a context of religious plurality in which the majority of believers are members of the Afro-Cuban Santeria movement, a syncretism of Catholicism and the native religions of the original African slaves. Again, what does Christ alone mean there?

The experience of such diversity encourages a deeper reflection on the importance of context to any discussion of Christ alone. In the context of the 16th century, Christ alone affirmed that salvation came solely through Christ, not mediated through the church, as had traditionally been proclaimed. For a reforming movement seeking to establish and define

I believe God is calling us as a church to deep and likely painful theological reflection

a new context for faithfulness, this became a critical statement of faith.

John's gospel presents another distinct and complex context, a context in which members of that community, a sectarian and beleaguered community, part of the Jewish diaspora, sought to live faithfully. It was a community that found refuge in Alexandria after the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, yet also a community that was on the margins of the synagogue, increasingly disassociated from the traditional forms of Judaism, betwixt and between in terms of defining itself in a new place. For this reforming movement, not the Torah but the affirmation of the Word, the Word which was with God at the beginning, the Word which became flesh in Jesus Christ—Christ the way, the truth and the life, the only way to God, established the context for faithful discipleship in an alien, threatening environment.

What about us? We are not 16th-century Reformers; we are not the first-century Johannine community. What might Christ alone mean in our context—or, perhaps, what shouldn't it mean? Surely the affirmation of Christ alone should not lead to a

smugness on our part, as if Christians of a certain sort have exclusive access to the mind of God: a God who says, "I will be who I will be," a God of surprises, a God who has consistently refused to be boxed in by our limited understandings (1 Corinthians 13:12).

What then does it mean? The religious context of Canada is changing. We experience it in congregational life; we see it all around us. It is in the midst of the challenges presented by this new (and for some, threatening) context that we are called to define what Christ alone means. What new thing is God doing among us? What is the model for faithful discipleship provided by Christ alone? What does the life and ministry

of the one who crossed boundaries mean for us, the one who made God known in new ways, the one who was sent to teach about the love of God for the whole world?

I believe God is calling us as a church to deep and likely painful theological reflection, not unlike what the author of John's gospel or the 16th-century Reformers were called to do in their contexts. It will require us to ask what it means to be reformed yet always reforming, what it means to follow the way of Christ in our world of diversity and difference.

In my work of preparing students for ministry, it calls upon me to do at least two things. First, it challenges me to reflect on the boundaries I have created that may be an impediment to what God is calling us to be in our time. It also calls on me to risk living as fully as I can those gospel values for which Christ alone provided the example, gospel values that are much more focused on love and acceptance than exclusion and marginalization. ■

Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon is principal of Knox College, Toronto.



June Robinson, Trinity, Victoria, B.C.

It Has to be the Shepherds!

JESUS COMES TO PEOPLE WHOSE REAL NEEDS OFTEN FRIGHTEN US AWAY.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Christmas Eve

Luke 2:1-20

Readers from small towns and rural communities will need to think about the people we struggle to look after at home, or try to pretend aren't nearby, or send into town. Those who go to church in the city, who have been in ministry downtown, will recognize people like Jerry. Jerry died on

Christmas Eve a few years ago.

Jerry lived on the street, in and out of rooming houses, at the men's shelter. For God knows how many years. God knows. Few others knew, or cared about his story. Jerry was schizophrenic.

For the first part of the month, Jerry could stay at the shelter. He could be polite to people when he asked them for spare change. But the medication would wear off. The meagre allowance his trustee managed for him would run out. That's when I'd see him. Hear him first. You couldn't miss his big,

gravelly voice. Or his rages.

Jerry made a lot of money at Christmas time. All those shoppers, feeling guilty about spending so much to fill those shiny shopping bags. All those workers, their charity fueled by a drink too many at the office Christmas lunch.

No one asks why the Jerrys are there. On the streets with their hands out. At the most wonderful time of the year.

There's no Christmas charity for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. No allowance, however small, from the government. Just an order to pick up and travel ➤



Aislin Perry, 9, First, Penetanguishene, Ont.

a dangerous road. They'll meet beggars and bandits along the way.

There's no room for them in the shelter. The Bethlehem Inn is one big room. Above a tavern or a public building.

It isn't a cozy bed and breakfast. More like the Metro Turning Point in Halifax. The Downtown Shelter in Vancouver. The manger where they put the baby, wrapped in rags, is most likely in a courtyard. A parking lot. Who will even think to look for them there?

Maybe that's why it has to be the shepherds! Homeless men and women. Counted less valuable than sheep. Predators and poachers can take the mentally ill, addicts, ex cons. So long as the sheep are safe.

When I picture the shepherds, I see Jerry. Abiding in the field. Wondering when he'll get a bite to eat.

Angels come. Biblical angels aren't all cotton wool and misty light. They're God's tribunes. The heavenly host isn't a choir. It's an army. Picture an angel, with the scroll of imperial decree in one hand and a sword in the other.

Who else will have the sheer gall, despite their fear, to stand their ground in the face of such an invasion? It has to be people who are used to confrontation with agents of Empire. The city police. The hired security of the Merchants' Association.

The angels announce the end of the Empire that enforces and profits from the poverty of people like the shepherds. The Jerrys. The Marys and Josephs of the world.

The angels take Caesar's titles: Son of God, Saviour, Christ, Lord. And put them on Jesus' head!

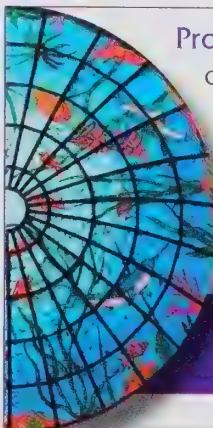
It has to be the shepherds! Who else will be crazy enough to believe and do what the angels say? Who else will be desperate enough to catch this vision of a world turned upside down in the hands of a baby? Who else will know where to look for the manger and the baby? It has to be the shepherds.

Near the end of his life, Jesus talks about where we should look for him. He says he'll be in the hungry, the thirsty, strangers, people without warm clothes, the sick, and the prisoners.

He says our response to people whose needs frighten us, people we don't want to see, people we dismiss with our charity, is really our response to him.

Given the circumstances of his birth, and the first visitors to his cradle, this shouldn't surprise us at all! ■

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe teaches at the Atlantic School of Theology.



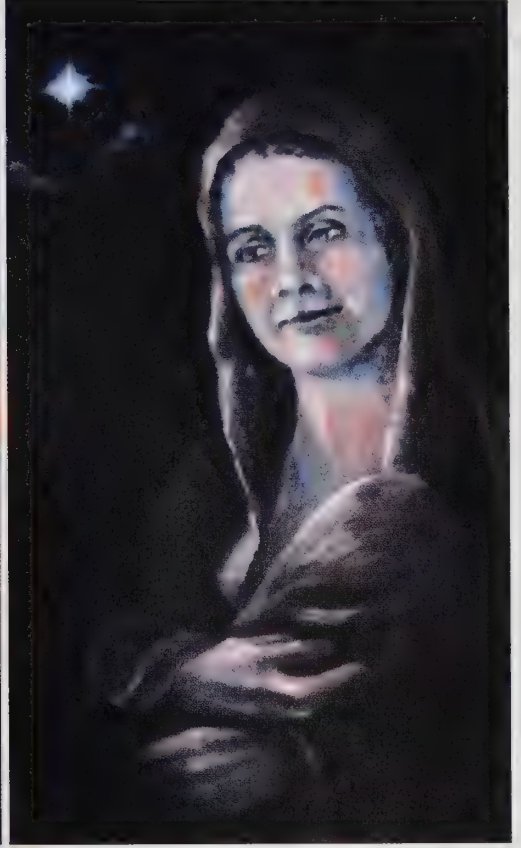
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Deana Weyman, St. Andrew's, King City, Ont.

Mary's Journey of Faith

STRANGE EVENTS AND TALL ORDERS DON'T DISCOURAGE THE MOTHER OF GOD.

BY CALVIN BROWN

Perhaps central to any celebration of Christmas is the picture of Mary holding the infant Jesus. Around the picture and beyond the biblical narrative some have developed a whole myth espousing for Mary a quasidevine nature and claiming that she, like Jesus, was immaculately conceived. The biblical witness however tells us that Mary was much more like us than like the angels and it is precisely because she was fully human that she serves as an encouragement to us. Mary was an amazing example of human faithfulness as she walked along a path where she sometimes took a wrong turn.

Mary began her journey as an ordinary girl who was encountered by God in an extraordinary way. She was young and full of dreams for a future with a man to whom she was engaged. But an angel appeared to announce that

God had a bigger plan for her and she submitted herself as a servant to God's seemingly strange design. I don't believe Mary at that time realized fully what that encounter meant or who this child of hers really was. She may have thought he would be the Messiah or the deliverer of Israel, or even the ruler of Israel, but to even imagine Jesus was God incarnate was more than anyone at the time could comprehend. The way the shepherds and wisemen showed up confirmed his special status, but Mary still didn't fully understand whom she held in her arms.

The Bible says she was troubled by much of what she heard and yet she neither despaired nor dismissed it out of hand. Her visit to her cousin, Elisabeth, who also had a visitation from God, must have offered further confirmation that she wasn't just imagining all this. Luke tells us that ►



Amy DeBoer, St. Andrew's, Richmond, Ont.

Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart. Sometimes in our own lives we have experiences that we don't really understand. Mary shows that we need to meditate on these things, trusting that in God's good time He will show us why this apparent tragedy is happening to us or what holy purpose these strange, amazing events have in the eternal plan of God. At the time of Jesus' presentation at the temple, with Simeon and Anna prophesying over him, she and Joseph didn't know what to think and could only marvel at it all. Yet Mary was thinking theologically; that is, she was seeking to understand the ways of God in these events.

It isn't that Mary always got things right. When a 12-year-old Jesus was found with the teachers in the temple, she scolded him for not being where she thought he should have been. Jesus simply replied that she didn't understand what he was doing. Again the gospel writer Luke says she treasured all these things in her heart. Mary shows us that even when we are rebuked by God the correct response is not to turn away in resentment but to spend time reflecting on what God is doing and value the process even when we think He has treated us unfairly.

On another occasion, Mary and Christ's brothers came to take him home, thinking that his religious activity had gotten out of hand. Jesus said his true family were those who submitted themselves to the will of God. This time of tension between Jesus and his mother was no doubt difficult. In the end, Mary is still with him at the cross and she herself is strongly connected with the faith community at Pentecost and beyond. We can believe that she has come to believe

that her son, raised from the dead, is indeed the only begotten son of God and she may have been even more amazed than we are that God almighty should be born and dwell among us. The first names she heard for her son—Jesus, the one who saves us, and Emmanuel, God with us—she now knew to be true in deeper ways than she could have imagined.

We can ponder all the things written in the creeds so in our doubting times we can recall the experience and faith of the whole church. Mary, however, was a pioneer on the journey of faith, and we would do well to walk in her footsteps and ponder her life in this season when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour. ■

Rev. Calvin Brown is pastor at Knox, Palmerston, and Knox, Drayton, Ont.

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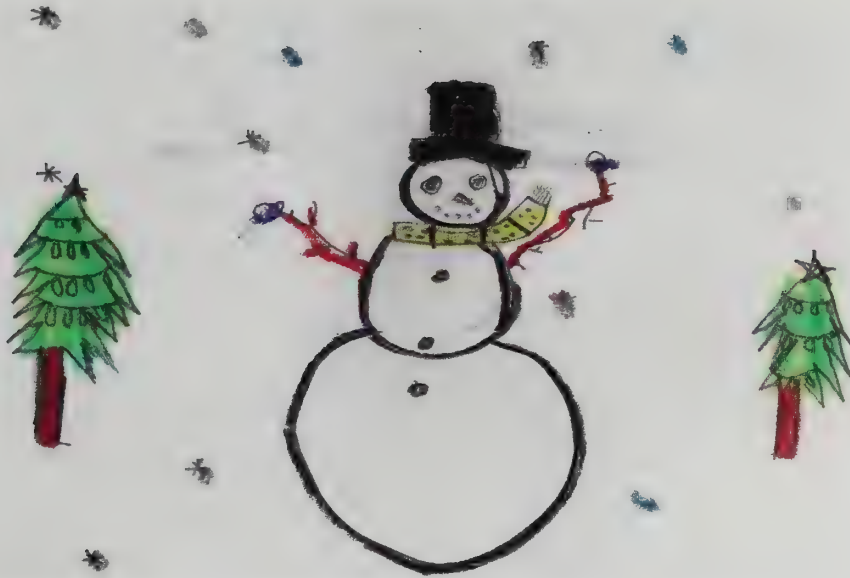
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Peyton Drynan, 9, St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.

A Missional Spirituality

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S CALL. **BY CHARLES FENSHAM**

"Today if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Hebrews 4:7)

The words kept echoing through my mind. I had no peace and no rest. Strangely and goadingly, they seemed to speak to me.

My dad's home office door was open and he sat puffing his pipe, perched over the original text of the Book of Job. On my next pass he called me in. "What is wrong?"

"Wrong?" I breathed in youthful defiance. "Nothing."

He waited. He was a man who knew when to be quiet. I flopped down in a chair. "Well, pa, you see I was reading the Book of Hebrews this morning."

He lifted his eyebrows; he was no small expert on this book having written a commentary on it.

"Here's the thing, 'today if you hear my voice do not harden your hearts.'" He puffed on his pipe and kept quiet. "Well, I can't get these words out of my mind."

"Ah," he said thoughtfully, "Perhaps God is calling you?"

I sighed the word, "yes," my sense of discomfort faded. A great burden was lifted.

To be called is to have a vocation. It gives meaning to one's life. If there is anything we need in today's church in Canada, it is the sense of meaning and purpose which flows out of knowing who we are and what we are called to. We are

in a kind of exile today. We are frantically trying to salvage dying congregations. That exile invites us to a new sense of call on our journey of Christian spirituality.

Stories of calls to leadership lie at the heart of the history of Christian spiritual formation. Such stories are highly personal and particular because God calls individuals in unique ways. But although particular and contextual, such stories always carry universal implications in the great unfolding story of creation and redemption.

But experience remains a problematic measure of call. For Martin Luther, his experience of peace and acceptance after striving so much to please God was crucial in gaining certainty of faith. John Calvin insisted that one should not look at one's self but rather at Christ for assurance in an attempt to turn the Christian journey away from self-absorption.

By the 17th century, the pietist movement in Germany ➤

This article is adapted and edited from Charles Fensham's forthcoming book, A Missional Christian Spirituality for the Emerging Church: The Journey to the Nations and for the Earth. To be published by Clement Academic, 2012

and the Puritan movement started to emphasize experience, and experience became fundamentally associated with certain religious feelings in persons.

Religious experience of this kind tended to individualize faith and the call to follow God as it merged with the rise of the autonomous individual in the Enlightenment. Today, personal experience, and particularly individualized feeling, has become a basic expectation. How often do we say, "I feel that..."?

It is clear that experience has importance in biblical stories of call. It is also clear that an excessive emphasis on experience, particularly extraordinary experience, can be frustrating and painful to those who never seem to experience such feelings. Moreover, those who do claim special experiences sometimes consider themselves spiritually elevated. Combined with individualism, such religious experience can lead to isolation or cult-like spirituality.

Call cannot be divorced from experience nor reduced to experience. That is why churches have emphasized the role of community in connection with call. It is the community who discerns call and leadership. Whether the individual has a profound experience does not determine call. In all the biblical stories, God's call was to community.

CALL TODAY

In early times, Christian vocation involved risk and commitment. In medieval times, vocation was connected with monastic vows. During the Reformation, vocation or calling became a concept that included the idea that one's daily work could be part of vocation. For much of the modern period, this Protestant idea of vocation played a formative role in shaping people's sense of meaning in life. In our post-Christian context, significant questions are being raised about vocation. Thus William Placher writes:

The very claim that there is something that God wants me to do with my life, for instance, threatens many contemporary definitions of freedom. Surely, I can do whatever I want with my life, and the

choice is mine? Much of the Christian tradition, however, has argued that that vision of life as a sea of infinite choices is more like slavery than freedom. If "freedom" means that every choice is open, and none is the wrong answer, then my choices cease to have any larger meaning. The direction of my life can be shaped by the pervasive siren calls of consumer culture, or by my own quest for immediate satisfaction. Either way, the advent of next year's fashions or the boredom I find in the pleasures of the moment leaves me hungry for something else, a cycle of hunger always unfulfilled.

The ever expanding world of choice, information and constant technological change requires a new emphasis on God's call and vocation for our spirituality.

Finding our identity, call and spirituality can be located in the opening chapters of Genesis. Having a calling is not just something that happens to us for specific church jobs. More importantly, calling is integrated with the way and logic of the whole of God's creation. The very act of creation is an act of God calling forth. The Word—God speaking—is the way of God's gracious act of creation. All things are constituted by God's call, and out of this deep and profound loving call comes our call as human beings. We need to grasp this profound connection between God's creating Word that calls forth creation, and God's gracious word that brings redemption and calls us to be part of it in mission.

THE EVOCATIVE GOD IN GENESIS

Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann says Genesis is a book of call. First, God calls forth creation to be God's faithful world. (Genesis 1-11) Then God calls specific people to be God's faithful people. (Genesis 12-50) Thus, both creation and the community of faith are "evoked by the speech of this God." To be human is to be called forth by God and then to be called by God for a special task or mission in creation. This is who we are. Christian spirituality starts here.

Our identity and spirituality grows out of our call to a journey of mission with creation. The inherent potential for creatures to resist God and not

heed God's call is soon realized in the unfolding story of the first three chapters of Genesis. This rebellion leads to the second kind of call, the call of anguish, the one we discover in Genesis 3:9, when God calls out to the human creatures in what is rendered in the Hebrew language in one agonising word, "Where?"

This is an impassioned God. In fact, there seems to be a kind of suffering within God. The freedom of God's creatures to obey or to rebel does not only bring the potential that God may suffer—the potential is realized! Whereas the calling forth of creation by the creative Word is an act that cannot be resisted, the calling of humankind and creation to its covenantal journey with God can be resisted. According to this story we can resist and we do. But God does not turn God's back on rebellious humans. God, who loves and cherishes creation as a child will not let it go. In this sense, God is already in this early text in a judging and gracious solidarity with the "poor" and the "poor in spirit." We, the cowering humans, are foolishly hiding until we hear the judging and gracious agonising cry, "Where?"

We are called and marked as creatures of the good and cherished creation and we are called in anguish as we run and hide in the garden. Just as these stories helped the Hebrew exiles to find their identity in Babylon, these texts tell us who we are in the "foreign lands" of consumer and technological culture or global empires of finance that exploit and destroy creation and people. It is here that we need to start if we want to talk about Christian missional spirituality. The message of God's agonizing call in the face of our resistance invites us to repentance and provides hope. Together, people and creation stand under God's dual call which sets them free. Creation is not abandoned but the great promise resounds, "I will bring all things together in reconciliation!" ■

Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham is associate professor of systematic theology at Knox College, Toronto, and member of St. Andrew's, Ancaster, Ont.



Judy Mallory,
Warkworth, Ont.

A Golden Opportunity

MINISTERING TO THE BOOMER GENERATION. **BY FRANK BREISCH**

Somewhere in their middle

decades, most people experience a time of radical re-evaluation of their lives, which often leads to significant change—the so-called mid-life crisis. They feel a need to develop those facets of their lives they have previously ignored. They raise many questions that often go unanswered. And that, I believe, makes it a time of opportunity for the church.

The oldest members of the Boomer generation have been through this time of re-evaluation; the youngest are in it or are approaching it. In the past, this generation left the church in great numbers. And although the reasons for those departures are many and complicated, the result is that they have largely gone through life without the hope, comfort and encouragement the gospel provides. ➤



Judy Mallory, Warkworth, Ont.

Seniors are in a position to reach Boomers effectively—more effectively, in fact, than they can reach the younger generations. Time and again I have heard people say we need to work at bringing young people into the church. Well, we certainly need to take good care of the teens and young adults who are part of our congregations. But we are kidding ourselves if we think that a church composed largely of seniors is going to be able to make itself attractive to unchurched youth who are two or three generations younger! Boomers, on the other hand, are the children of those seniors, and we have a chance to reach out to the next younger generation and their friends.

This is not a plea for a national program to turn seniors into evangelists. But I believe we can only

minister effectively if we first face some questions: Do we really believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ makes a difference in our lives? Does the message that God loves us unconditionally really touch us deeply? Do we seek to open our hearts so that we are ready to receive God's love and reflect it in our lives? Do we really love our children and their friends? Do we care about their spiritual welfare? Do we tell them how God's love makes a difference in our lives?

Unless a ministry to Boomers flows out of love for God and love for them, it will fail. Otherwise, they will rightly see our efforts as self-serving attempts to keep our institutions going.

A major part of our problem is that we have taken to an extreme the words of St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel always; when necessary, use words." In my experience, it is hard to find a Presbyterian church where people are comfortable talking about God's love and how it affects their lives. St. Francis lived in a different world than we do! How do we expect people who have little or no memory of Christianity to interpret our lives in Christian terms? If we are to reach out to the Boomers with the gospel, we will have to begin speaking clearly about the place God has in our lives. That involves a major change in Presbyterian culture.

We must develop ways to encourage people to speak more freely, and to make ministry to Boomers a priority. Here is a golden opportunity on our doorstep. Our children and their friends are a mission field that is ripe. The question is whether we are willing to make the effort to reach them with Good News that can change their lives for the better. ■

Rev. Frank Breisch is an octogenarian Presbyterian minister and housing chaplain for Bethany Care Society, Calgary, serving seniors who live in Bethany's independent living buildings.

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PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for Presbyterian World Service & Development • 2011 Edition, Issue 4



Presbyterians Respond to the Millions Suffering from Pakistan's Second Battering

IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT PAKISTAN MARKED THE one-year anniversary of massive flooding that left one-fifth of the country underwater, killed nearly 2,000 people and directly affected about 20 million through destruction of property, livelihoods and infrastructure. Now, Pakistan is reeling from a second blow following another season of damaging monsoon flooding.

The latest floods in southeastern Sindh province began during mid-August and have caused extensive damage from torrential rains. An estimated 433 people have been killed and more than 750 injured. Approximately 655,000 people have been displaced and are now living in camps. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 70% of standing crops have been destroyed in an area often relied on as the breadbasket of Pakistan.

PWS&D is working through local partner Church World Service – Pakistan/Afghanistan to support victims of the latest floods at a time of critical need. The disaster represents a second devastating blow to farming families as last year's floods and pre-existing conditions for poor crop yields and malnutrition left millions unable to access enough food. Aid efforts are desperately needed as news of the disaster has been slow to get out and relief from the international community has only trickled in.

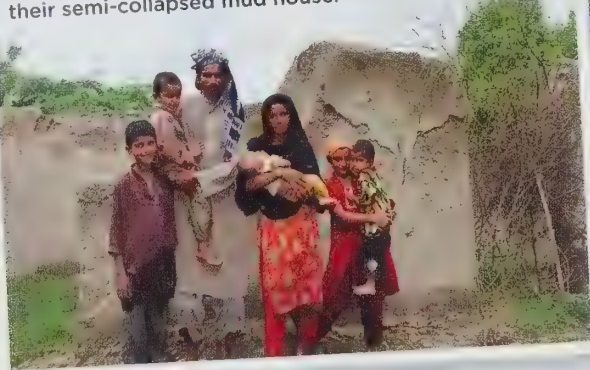
The widespread flooding has washed away homes, livestock, food stores and farmland. Over 5.4 million people have been impacted—the majority poor and landless, relying on agriculture and livestock production in order to provide for their families.

"Three acres of my crops have been submerged in water along with the wheat we saved for home consumption," explains farmer Jam Joseph. Both Jam and his wife Mebhai are now faced with the threat of a food shortage for their family. "We do not have crops; we saved 60 maunds (2,400 kilograms) of wheat for food and that has all gone away."

Now, not only do families require assistance meeting food consumption needs, it is also critical that agricultural lands are quickly rehabilitated. If the planting season is missed, it will severely effect next spring's harvest, income-earning opportunities and food supply—while also increasing food insecurity and malnutrition, with affects rippling throughout the country.

"The unmet needs in Sindh are a tragedy waiting to happen," says Allan Calma, CWS-P/A's Deputy Director of the Disaster Management Program. "The high prevalence of poverty in Sindh exacerbates the challenges of overcoming this disaster. The destruction of agricultural crops and loss of significant livelihoods means

Jannat's neighbours, Mohammad, Khamoon and their family near their semi-collapsed mud house.



these communities have little or no resources with which to restart their lives."

Initially, PWS&D is working in partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank to support 2,000 families with food packages. With your help, additional initiatives will provide other needed support such as tents, health services and emergency supplies.

Jannat's humble mud home had two small rooms where she lived with her husband and two children in Thatta District, Sindh province. When the rains hammered and didn't let up, the mud swallowed everything she had.

"My entire house has collapsed along with some of our belongings that have gone underground with it," she explained. "God give me the strength so we can rebuild our house to be able to live the life we were living previously."

Jannat's husband, Haider, makes a meagre living by selling vegetables in the local market at a small stand, earning only \$1-\$2 a day. "The money is not enough because the cart doesn't belong to him," Jannat explained. Her husband must pay rent out of his daily earnings.

The family now lives in her parents' house along with Jannat's three sisters, her brother and her sister-in-law. The living arrangements are tight and the desire to get back into her home is high.

"It will cost as much as 40,000 rupees (approximately \$480) to rebuild our house. We do not have that much money."

Jannat's neighbours, Khamoon and Mohammad, share her sorrow and relate to her loss since their home was also damaged. Mohammad was able to secure his second room with a stick but it is now on the verge of collapsing.



Jannat and her children on the land where their home once stood.

"God give me the strength so we can rebuild"

Jannat is grateful to have shelter with her parents, however she remembers all that she once had. "We have lost more than just our house; we lost things inside our house and our space." Jannat continued to explain that not only are the finances needed to rebuild their house simply out of reach for them, but also that additional funds are needed to replace their household items.

Jannat, Khamoon, and Mohammad have received food packages, tents and blankets as part of a program supported by PWS&D through CWS-P/A. Through this assistance, the families have gained a little bit of security during an incredibly difficult time.

While the tents provide temporary roofs and the nutritious food distributions are celebrated, there is no doubt that the families in the area have larger concerns. These include winter worries, health risks, lost crops, diminished livelihoods, clothing, and more importantly, stronger homes for the future.

Despite the family's remaining challenges and needs, Jannat is fortunate when compared to the thousands of people who have yet to receive any assistance at all. Relief is still desperately needed to not only help individual families and communities but also assist in alleviating some of the pressure on global poverty caused by the increasing number and scale of natural disasters in the country. The affected communities are mostly impoverished, marginalized and need assistance in order to keep them from falling farther below the poverty line and deeper into food insecurity, debt and uncertainty.

With your prayers and ongoing support of PWS&D programs in Pakistan and around the world, we can ensure the vulnerable receive nutritious food, drink clean water and access life-saving supplies during times of incredible need.

A young girl at the Dadaab
refugee camps near the
Kenya-Somalia border.
PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY, ACT ALLIANCE.

Appeal for East Africa Continues

Famine, drought and hunger continue to sweep across East Africa, and Presbyterians in Canada maintain their solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania through support of PWS&D programs that are providing food, nutritional supplements, clean water, shelter, hygiene kits, agriculture training and psychosocial support.

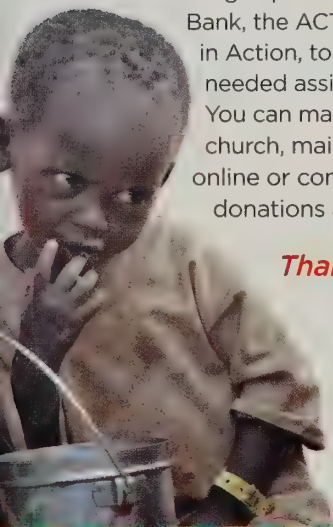
Congregations are holding fundraisers, using the PWS&D East Africa bulletin insert and speaking about relief efforts during a "Moment for Mission" at Sunday services. Your ongoing support of this life-saving work is still urgently needed.

Working in partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, the ACT Alliance and Canadian Churches in Action, together we can bring desperately needed assistance to those most in need. You can make a donation through your church, mail a cheque to the office, donate online or contact PWS&D. Please mark donations as "East Africa Relief."

*Thank you for your generosity
and compassion!*



actalliance



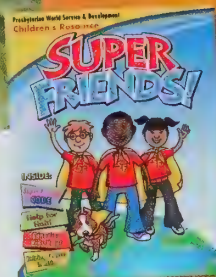


MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW – PWS&D SUNDAY IS FEBRUARY 5, 2012

PWS&D Sunday is a time for you and your congregation to remember the work of our church in supporting marginalized and vulnerable people through programs in international development and emergency relief. Let's make this Sunday, February 5,

a time when we take a moment to think of those who struggle for basic necessities such as nutritious food, clean water, adequate health care, quality education and basic human rights.

Every year, PWS&D produces a variety of resources for use during



PWS&D Sunday, including a full order of service, bulletin inserts and offering envelopes. This year we also have a new children's resource called "Super Friends!" that can help kids learn how our church works with international partners in emergency situations. This fun and creative material includes games and activities for kids aged 7-14 years and includes stories from overseas.



Meaningful Gift-Giving this Christmas

Ever wondered what to buy for the person who has everything? Is there someone on your Christmas list who would prefer you skip the usual Christmas trinkets and knick-knacks and opt for something more meaningful this year?

The Presbyterian Church in Canada's new Gifts of Change catalogue provides gift-giving ideas that are unique ways to reach out to vulnerable people both in Canada and around the world.



\$10 provides a meal for someone through Native ministries

\$30 provides a family with seeds and training on how to grow more food

\$100 provides a family displaced by a disaster with an emergency food package

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Donald MacLaren, 72, St. James', Truro, N.S.

Sophia, 4, Knox,
Oakville, Ont.



The December issue is my favourite issue to design—it's our annual Christmas Art Contest, an issue filled with colourful and original artwork, all created by you, our readers.

In late October, when most people are thinking about pumpkins, I'm already humming Christmas tunes and eagerly waiting to see all the entries we've received.

(To Amy, our acting managing editor, I sound like a broken record, asking daily, "Did we get any more art today?!")

Thankfully, and gratefully, we did! Seventy entries to be exact, from artists across the country ranging in ages from four to 90, and in styles ranging from the cutest crayon scribbles from our youngest readers, to gorgeous, highly detailed and refined paintings from some very accomplished older readers.

This is my fifth year working on the December issue, and each and every year I'm astonished by the quality and quantity of submissions we receive—and that makes my job of choosing the coveted cover spot a tough one, indeed.

This year, after long and careful consideration, I chose Bill Richer's piece of a trumpet-playing angel flying in a star-filled night. The colours are simple yet striking—blues, whites and golds—the composition is nicely balanced, the work has great texture; but, most importantly, the image feels joyful. When I see it, I feel optimistic, calm—it brings me back to my childhood, when Christmas was a magical time of year. Thank you, everyone, for your submissions. Merry Christmas! ■

Caroline Bishop is the Record's art director.



Bill Richer, 81, Saanich Peninsula, North Saanich, B.C.



© 2011 Webb, Knox, North Eastheps, Ont.

Waiting for Christmas

LEARNING HOW TO 'BE' IN ADVENT. BY KATIE MUNNIK

When I was little, Mum made an Advent calendar—a quilted thing of brightly printed cotton with a picture of big-eyed animals cosily doing something in a well-stocked country kitchen. I think they might have been threading cranberries on a string. Or maybe it was popcorn. Something festive. And it was very much 80s kitsch, I suppose, but at the time I thought it was beautiful.

Most importantly, all around the picture there were numbers—one through 24. Each number had a ring stitched beside it, and Mum carefully tied two Hershey's Kisses to each ring. Two because there were four of us, and waiting for three days while the others ate chocolate, having yours only on the fourth day, was no way to get through Advent.

I'm not one for quilting, I'm afraid, so last year I bought an Advent candle for my family instead. It sat on our table, and every evening we lit it over supper. It was a tapered candle, wider at the bottom than at the top. As Christmas got closer, it took longer each evening for the numbers to melt away. That meant that we sat longer, too. Sometimes quietly, sometimes at top joyous volume, we watched the candle's light together. Some nights, when we had to rush out for something at school or a carol service at church or to Christmas parties with friends, we missed lighting it altogether. The next night, the kids would be concerned that we'd missed out, and they would make sure we sat together even longer, catching up with our candle.

The difficulty with all Advent calendars, whatever their shape, is that they get used up. Mum's was a bit more lasting—you could always sew on more kisses next year—but come Christmas Day, Advent calendars are empty and obsolete. Maybe one day I'll craft one that would be as beautiful as Mum's, as sweet as chocolate, as place-creating as the candle but

that somehow builds up rather than counting down.

We often think of Advent as something to get through. We make it synonymous with December, a succession of stressful days and weeks before we can put our feet up and enjoy the egg nog. We make it a stressful journey to be rushed through.

But Advent might be a place in its own right, not just a road forward. A place of preparation, perhaps, but a place nonetheless.

Like a table. Not just a means to an end. Not just a place for consumption, but a place to be and to be nourished.

Advent might be the table where we sit as the incarnation draws near.

Some of what I'm reading right now is helping me understand this idea. Gertrude Stein grappled earnestly with the meanings of self, and she drew a line between identity and entity. Identity she saw as the bit of us that we compose for others to see. Entity is the part which does the looking.

Christ, the Advent child, is the identity of God. He is the face of God that people could see. But Christ is also the entity of God—God near enough to see us, face to face.

When I was a new mum, this was a surprise of birth for me. When my tiny girl was born, she was astonishingly her-

self. Already herself. I could only look and look, and she looked back. A small, hungry scrap of being already looking back at me.

At Christmas, God was born into entity and into relationship. In Advent, we wait for that relationship to begin. Again we wait to see and to be seen by the Word made flesh. We wait with each other, looking into each other's faces by candlelight, waiting for the Christ child's arrival. We wait together.

Happy Advent. ■



Wendy Froats, St. Matthew's, Ingleside, Ont.

Katie Munnik currently lives in Scotland with her family. She is the author of *The Messy Table*, a blog about faith and family found exclusively at presbyterianrecord.ca.



Ann Baptist, St. Paul's, Bramalea, Ont.

An Advent to Remember

TELLING AN OLD STORY TO INSPIRE GRACE AND HUMILITY. BY JIM MCKAY

The *Magnificat* during Advent is soul-stirring, indeed. Every time I hear the reading or sing the canticle, I am immediately transported back to a scene in the living room of my aunt and uncle in Oshawa, Ont.

There, an aspiring candidate for the Christian ministry, let's call him Ebenezer McKay, is being tutored in the gospel arts by his uncle Leo during the family's Christmas visit.

Leo Connolly, devout Roman Catholic, Irish, WWI veteran, affectionately known as 'Tarz' (Tarzan to his adoring brothers-in-law), and in those days of my youth an executive with General Motors of Canada, offered his attentive nephew this wisdom: "Jimmy, my boy, if you're going to be a minister, you'll have to know something of the Latin in scripture."

Uncle Leo, as I picture him now, reclining in his armchair after a long day at the office, with feet stretched out comfortably on an ottoman, necktie loosened, shirt collar undone, launched into the Latin of this unforgettable text: "*Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.*"

And so began an extended recital of a portion of *The Sicilian's Tale: King Robert of Sicily*, from the collection, *Tales of a Wayside Inn* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Robert of Sicily, regal in splendid luxury, hears the chanting of priests at vespers "on St. John's eve." The words pique his curiosity and he inquires of an attending clerk about their meaning. The clerk replies, "He has put down the mighty from their seat/ And has exalted them of low degree."

Whereupon the King sneers:

"'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known,



Deana Weyman, St. Andrew's, King City, Ont.

There is no power can push me from my throne!"

With that he dozes off, only to awaken in a dream where he discovers everything has changed. He is no longer king but a wretched serf in the royal court. In his place on the throne is an angel disguised as King Robert.

Robert, in squalor, is furious that this apparent imposter has seized his throne and rages against this humiliating reversal. To no avail, however, for he is mocked and scorned by everyone he meets. His place is now that of the court fool.

Gradually his stubborn pride gives way and is vanquished.

At that moment, the angel king in a private audience reveals himself to Robert: "I am an Angel, and thou art the King!"

Humbly, Robert accepts restoration and once more in ermine robes resumes his former station. When his courtiers rush into the hall, "they found him there/ Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in prayer."

Whenever human arrogance peaks in a nation or in an individual or in a community—even one of faith, this gospel theme in *The Magnificat* rings out with devastating clarity, calling us to repent, to reassess and to reach out for the spiritual makeover that will restore the grace of gratitude in our lives.

The Sicilian's Tale would be a brilliant dramatic reading alongside Luke's version of Mary's extraordinary song. Try reading it that way at a Christmas Eve service or as a prelude to the celebration of the Lord's Supper in Advent.

Your congregation may well be on their knees around that table!

Wouldn't that be an Advent to remember? ■

Rev. Jim McKay is a retired minister living serenely in Saskatoon, Sask.



Sydney O'Brien, 13, Trafalgar, Oakville, Ont.

Gingerbread Goodness & Popcorn Blessings

MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT YOU'VE GOT. BY KRISTINE O'BRIEN

The first Christmas my husband and I were married, we lived in a tiny apartment. At barely 400 square feet, it had just enough room for us to live happily, although my father reminded us often that it was so small, "You have to go out into the hall to change your mind!"

We liked our bright coach-house apartment in Longbranch with its big windows and pretty bedroom. Still, in such a limited space, there was little room for a Christmas tree. Carrying it up the two flights of stairs would be a chore, and putting it up might mean there was no room to sit down. We reasoned that since we really had no budget for such an extravagance anyway, perhaps we would forgo a tree altogether. We would just visit friends and family and enjoy their's instead.

As the December days crept by, with me writing university exams and my husband helping his family's business in their busiest time of the year, we just didn't feel quite right about our tree decision. This was our first year as a family together, in our first 'house.' It just didn't feel like Christmas without the smell of a fresh evergreen.

We scrounged everywhere looking for bits of forgotten change, looking under couch cushions and in coat pockets. We took our few dollars and went out to find the smallest tree we could. We found one—a slightly scraggly fir tree just a few feet high. Perfect. We would even be able to get it up the stairs without too much trouble.

Our first-ever Christmas tree was glorious! It was dark green and smelled of Christmas carols, turkey dinners and presents under the tree. We even managed to fit it into a corner, leaving enough room for our loveseat and one chair. Once we had it propped up in a bucket, however, we realized we had a problem: there were no decorations.



Emily O'Brien, 10, Trafalgar, Oakville, Ont.

When a man and woman get married, two become one. That necessitates taking some things with us into our new life together, and leaving others behind. Staring at our new tree, my husband and I suddenly noticed that for all the warm memories we brought with us, we had left behind all of the Christmas ornaments from our childhood. Since we had spent all our available money on the tree itself, we were at a loss.

That was when I realized we had a few things in the pantry: flour, spices, eggs. I looked up a gingerbread recipe and soon had cookie stars, wreaths, and holly leaves. Red ribbon from the box of wrapping supplies tied them to the tree. We made popcorn and used a needle and thread to string it into long

white garlands. Some leftover scraps of tartan ribbon and a few kitchen twist ties made a handful of pretty little bows, too. It may have been short and scraggly, but we were quite pleased with our little tree that year.

It is never very much fun living on a tight budget. On and off over the years, we have felt the pinch of difficult times and know that it can be awfully depressing. Still, I look back now and realize that as bereft of money as we felt, we did have an abundance of gifts: a bit of spare change, food in the cupboard, creativity, ingenuity, each other.

Yes, even in those years that my parents would have called 'lean,' if we look carefully enough there are still blessings to be counted. As you celebrate this year, may you be able to look beyond whatever challenges you face and discover the good things that God has tucked into the unnoticed corners of your life. ■

Rev. Kristine O'Brien is minister at Trafalgar in Oakville, Ont., and author of the blog, [The Blooming Reverend](http://TheBloomingReverend.com) (bloomingreverend.wordpress.com). She and her husband, Pat have four kids.



Elizabeth Norrington, 63, Nassagaweya, Ont.

A Different Kind of Nativity

A QUEBEC CHURCH CREATES A UNIQUE SCENE TO INVOKE TRUE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

BY KAREN SMITH

What might the Christmas story look like from the perspective of a refugee? That was the question that St. Columba's Team for Refugee Action asked as it designed the theme for Advent 2010. With the support of our minister, Ian Fraser, and fellow St. Columban, Glynis Williams, director of Action Réfugiés Montréal, we set to work to use the season to spotlight our desire to sponsor a refugee family to Canada.

As we studied the biblical text, we realized Jesus himself was a refugee. Mary and Joseph were internally displaced people, forced from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and then were refugees, going from Judea to Egypt to flee the whim of a powerful monarch.

The theme we chose was "Displaced," initially referring to the displaced refugee. We wanted to understand how difficult it must be for a refugee to start over in a very different country. We talked about how this would feel, the obstacles that would have to be overcome, and the very real truth that although "saved" from whatever threats they needed saving from, they were still leaving home and everything they knew. These reflections led us to realize that we, as Christians, often feel displaced. We have become displaced persons as we live lives of entitlement in a world of consumerism and self-centeredness. Our need for food, shelter, and clothing has been displaced by the god of consumption. Dare we admit it, but we often lose the true meaning of Christmas. Even more, we are displaced from God as we compartmentalize our lives and distance ourselves from God's all-encompassing love. Not only are we displaced, and not only are refugees displaced, but God, too, is displaced and thus our Advent theme was formed.

By creating a very different nativity from the traditional ones that decorate our churches and homes, we wanted to remind passersby of another way to view the Christmas story.



The refugee nativity scene created by St. Columba-by-the-Lake, Pointe Claire, Que.

To create the scene we wrapped a few willing accomplices with a lot of industrial plastic wrap, gently cut them out, and pieced the hollow shapes back together to make our faceless human forms.

We were going to draw faces, but decided that a faceless form would better speak to our story. We had the shape of a man and a woman leaning over a crib in what could have been a refugee tent. We had UN bags of "food," old dishes lying around and a single light bulb hanging from the ceiling. Our scene was complete.

I remember standing in the tent, placing the hands and arms, and feeling a sense of gentleness. How must it have felt for Joseph and Mary, in a new town, nowhere to sleep, with meager belongings and a new baby, not knowing what would happen next? At that moment I was grateful for the courage and resilience of Mary, Joseph, Jesus and so many others who dare to incarnate the love of God even in such terrible, inhuman circumstances.

We received many puzzled looks from parishioners and neighbours alike. Folks wondered what this was about... where were the halos? Where was the beautiful baby Jesus? And yet, they knew this was a nativity scene—why had we changed it? By jolting people out of their comfort zones, we achieved our goal. This wasn't about making ourselves feel better (by sponsoring a refugee), it wasn't about the fairy tale Christmas season with presents and eggnog, it wasn't even about singing carols and spending time with family; it was, and is, about remembering the truth: We are all God's children. We are all displaced in one way or another, and yet, God has not abandoned us. And the birth of Jesus is our proof. ■

Karen Smith is a member at St. Columba-by-the-Lake, Pointe-Claire, Que., and a member of their Team for Refugee Action.

People & Places

To make People & Places submissions, email: peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca

St. Andrew's, Welland, Ont.

St. Andrew's welcomed 14 new adult members in October. Ten members joined the church through confession of faith; two joined through confession of faith and baptism; Mrs. Muriel Hutchinson transferred from another congregation; and Rev. Norman Hutchinson joined as a retired minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The St. Andrew's congregation rejoices in God's goodness and the growth of His church.

Back row: Rev. Norman Hutchinson, Maurice Hayman, Betty Martin, Margaret Tisi, Chuck Headey, Carole Boneberg, Mike Boneberg, Rev. Guy Sinclair.

Front row: Muriel Hutchinson, Ruth Haynes, Holly Moore, Margaret Cooke, Marjorie Hyde, Yolaine Stemphile, Geil Pavey.

See our website for more photos.



Morningside High Park, Toronto

In June, Morningside High Park celebrated the 90th birthday of Ruby Chalmers (née Benzies), who has been a member of the congregation for the last 80 years. In that time, Ruby has been involved with the Sunday school, acted as president of the Women's Auxiliary, and served as an elder. Today she still sits on numerous committees and manages the church's legendary coffee hour. The church's young people have grown up with "Ruby's Treats," a table stocked with cookies in the winter and freezies in the summer. As the picture shows, the grateful congregation reciprocated with "ruby-red" roses and a cake for her birthday celebration.



Sand Hill, Ont.

Cora Wilson enjoyed a free ride courtesy of a horse named Nova in September when Sand Hill Church commemorated its historically-designated horse sheds, which were built in 1890. Nova's period-dressed admirer is Chloe Ann Baker, and the driver is Rob Berkvens. The event included free rides given by nine teams of horses and wagons, a blessing of the horses, and a meal of chili, buttered rolls and, of course, cake.

Little Narrows, N.S.

Friends, family and the members of two congregations gathered in July for the induction of Rev. Andrew MacDonald as minister of Little Narrows and St. Andrew's, Whycomagh. Several members of the Presbytery of Cape Breton conducted the service. Pictured here are MacDonald, Rev. Marian Barclay MacKay, presbytery moderator, and Rev. Lloyd Murdock, search committee convener.



Presbytery of Western Han-Ca

In August, pastors and leaders from six churches in the Presbytery of Western Han-Ca came together in Calgary for the presbytery's first English Ministry (EM) Conference. The three-day conference was a chance for EM leaders to build relationships, share stories of common experiences and challenges, and create a network for further support in their ministries. Guest speakers Rev. Victor Kim and Rev. John Huh received rave reviews, and organizers are already anticipating a second conference.

Order of Diaconal Ministries

The Order of Diaconal Ministries had a reason to celebrate at their 24th biennial council meeting at Crieff Hills, Ont., in September. The meeting saw the unveiling of Rev. Joyce Davis' book, *From the Bottom Up: A Story of Collegial Leadership*. The book is a history of the Order of Diaconal Ministries and is dedicated to the hundreds of deaconesses and diaconal ministers who have served over the last century. The author, pictured here with a copy of her book, joined in the celebration.



online extra

ON OUR WEBSITE: More pictures from St. Andrew's, Welland, Ont., and Donna Franklin leads women gathered at Forbes, Grande Prairie, Alta., in a "Faith Under Fire" retreat.

From the Moderator

Finding Forgiveness

THE MOMENT RECONCILIATION BECAME MORE THAN JUST A WORD. BY RICK HORST

"Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore, be imitators of God..." (Ephesians 4:31-5:1a)

On the scale of "most difficult things to do" in this life, surely the ability to forgive must be somewhere near the head of the line, don't you think? I'm not speaking of the driver who refused to let me merge into his lane this morning, or the woman who stepped in front of me in the bank line over the lunch hour (although I did just think of them...). No, I'm speaking of the remnant of hurtful words or destructive deeds that have cut us to the core, and have left a lasting scar behind. That kind of forgiveness.

For three days in October, I was privileged to attend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in Halifax as an official representative of our Presbyterian Church in Canada. I was listening to the voices of Indian Residential School survivors, and frankly, what I heard is still echoing loudly in my ears and in my heart. To be honest, I'm not really sure what I was expecting before I headed east, but I know what I experienced, and it was full-on anguish and remorse. Not to mention much personal weeping. And I was only a listener! (Or so I thought.)

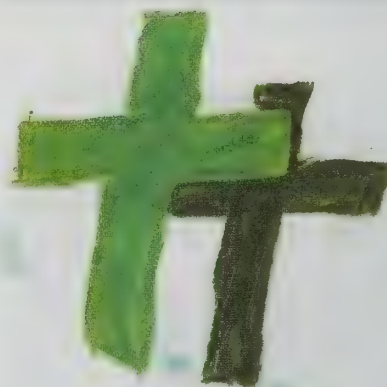
The complicity of the churches in the Government of Canada's "assimilation policy" toward First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples is something from which we must never hide. It is ugly, regret-

table, and far from the gospel of Jesus Christ. There were, it must be stressed, many teachers across those schools who embodied the most noble values of acceptance and love toward these children. Yet most of these children were six years of age or less when they were simply taken (read stolen) from their parents. To help children learn and grow is a most laudable endeavour; the ulterior motive of "killing the Indian in the child" is a stain upon our work and witness that can

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never be excused by saying "it was a different time." Nevertheless, and by God's renewing Spirit, we have been journeying daily down the road of apology and reconciliation as a genuine expression of our profound sadness for past sins and our desire for a more hopeful future for indigenous Canadians. And, we will also pray that our indigenous neighbours can hear the genuineness of our continuing apology and accept it.

One personal moment demands sharing. As I sat listening to one survivor's horrific tale of physical and emotional abuse (at age seven), a First Nations woman, herself a survivor, was sitting to my left. As she heard the inhuman



Tate Drynan, 12, St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.

details being shared, she (and I) began to cry. As the speaker's story concluded, my neighbour was simply unable to contain all her emotions. Feeling badly for "disturbing" my listening, she suddenly turned to me and weepingly apologized for her behaviour. "I'm sorry!" she said, so genuinely, so emphatically. And in my tears, thinking now of the pain that she, too, was personally recalling, I answered her, "No ... I'm sorry!" Her face instantly lit up, she immediately reached out her arm to mine, and we embraced. And the word "reconciliation" was no longer just a word. ■

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Dr. Rick Horst is minister at St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont. Follow him at presbyterian.ca/moderator.

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Winchester, Ont., St. Paul's; Chesterville, St. Andrew's; Morewood; full-time; interim moderator Rev. Jim Ferrier, PO Box 131, Maxville, ON K0C 1T0; 613-538-2582; jim_olga@sympatico.ca.

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Cambridge, Knox's Galt; interim moderator Rev. Angus Sutherland, 75 Grand Ave. N., Cambridge, ON N1S 2L1; 519-748-4540

(office); ajmacbagpipe@yahoo.com.

Colborne, Old St. Andrew's; half-time minister; interim moderator Rev. David G. Cooper, 67 Victoria Ave., Belleville, ON K8N 2A1; 613-242-6927; revdavecooper@gmail.com.

Elmvale, Elmvalle and Flos, Knox; interim moderator Rev. Karen Horst, 144-580 West St. S., Orillia, ON L3V 6L8; 705-828-5412; karenhorst@rogers.com.

Etobicoke, Graceview; (current minister retired November 2011); interim moderator Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock, c/o Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church, 4 Morningside Ave., Toronto, ON M6S 2V2; 416-766-4765; karen.dimock@bellnet.ca.

Gravenhurst, Knox; Minister; interim moderator Rev. Courtney M. Crawford, 28 Gray St., PO Box 821, Coldwater, ON L0K 1E0; 705-238-8648; revcmcrawford@gmail.com.

Markham, Markham Chinese; full-time associate minister for English-speaking ministry, familiarity with Mandarin and Cantonese languages beneficial; interim moderator Rev. Sam Priestley, 19 Elm Lea St.,

Markham, ON L3P 3M8; 905-294-1633; sam.priestley@bell.net.

Nottawa, Emmanuel; full-time minister; interim moderator Rev. Heather Malnick, 206 Murphy Rd., Baxter, ON L0M 1B1; 705-424-0779; livingfaith@zing-net.ca.

Oshawa, St. Luke's and St. James (new two-point charge); joint interim moderators Rev. Dr. Lynda Reid, lyndareid@bellnet.ca and Rev. Dr. Ian Clark, drianclark@gmail.com.

Scarborough, St. David's; interim moderator Rev. J. P. Ian Morrison, 17 Earswick Dr., Scarborough, ON M1E 1C7; 416-265-0135; ian.morrison@bellnet.ca.

Toronto, Calvin; interim moderator Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis, 1 Greenland Rd., Toronto, ON M3C 2E4; 416-444-3471; hathan1964@hotmail.com.

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Toronto, St. John's; half-time minister; co-interim moderators Rev. Dr. Nick Athanasiadis, nick@leasidepresbyterianchurch.ca and Rev. Angela J. Cluney, 670 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto, ON M4G 2K4; 416-422-0510; angela@leasidepresbyterianchurch.ca.
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Warton, St. Paul's; Minister Interim Moderator Rev. Terry Samuel Box 931, Lion's Head, ON N0H 1W0, 519 793 6265 or 519 396 6082; tsamuel@bmts.com.

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Irwin Cunningham, c/o Saanich Peninsula Presbyterian Church, 9296 East Saanich Rd., North Saanich, BC V8L 1H8; 250-656-2241; minister@saanichpeninsulapc.org.

Obituaries



Allison, James Cleland, died at the age of 93 on April 27, 2011 at Southlake Regional Health Centre, Newmarket, Ont. Jim's connection with the Presbyterian Church began at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in his hometown

of Belleville, Ont. Before leaving for the University of Toronto to study medicine, Jim was an active worker at St. Andrew's and later counted his experience there as a major influence on his life.

It was there that Jim married nursing student Clara McPhee on Feb. 5, 1944. Jim's medical career took them first to North Bay for 10 years. Jim, Clara and their young daughters attended North Bay Presbyterian Church before their move to the Toronto area so Jim could pursue his interests in medical administration and rehabilitation.

While Jim worked at Chedoke Hospital, Hamilton, Ont., he and Clara were well-loved members of the Chedoke Presbyterian Church family. Jim was an elder there and served as clerk of session from 1979 to 1981. Following their move to Aurora, Ont., in 1982, Jim and Clara joined St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Jim became an elder there and served until 1992.



Maddock, Elsie: Well done Elsie Maddock, thou good and faithful servant! A life-long friend of the family of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, New Liskeard, Ont., passed away at the Temiskaming Lodge in Haileybury, Ont.,

on Wed., Oct. 19, 2011 at the age of 104.

Elsie became an elder at St. Andrew's at the age of 74 and was the first female elder in Northern Ontario. She actively served as an elder until 1996 when she became an elder emeritus. Some will remember her singing in the church choir for many years and serving as its president, directing

the junior choir, teaching a Sunday school class, participating in fundraising projects with the women's group, the Canadian Bible Society and a host of other church-related activities too numerous to mention here. She was famous for her smile, warmth and welcoming nature and received the nickname "kissing elder." Whether you were a visitor, stranger or friend, if you had crossed paths with this dear lady you were the recipient of a kiss or a hug. But above all else she is admired for her deep love for the Lord and the scriptures, and her commitment to prayer.

The words of the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 capture Elsie's dedication to God, her love for her family and others and those she served alongside and was close to: *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."*

A celebration of her life and eternal life was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, New Liskeard, Ont., on Oct. 24, 2011.



Nevin, Byron Arthur, passed away at Hamilton General Hospital on Oct. 28, 2011 at the age of 88, survived by his loving wife, Alice Jean of 62 years; sister Elizabeth; children Kathy Chapman with her husband, Brian; and Robert with his wife,

Nancy Snider; as well as grandchildren Lisa, Simon and Jeffery Snider-Nevin.

He obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of New Brunswick, completed theological training at Knox College, Toronto, and subsequently spent his working life in the service of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as a tireless and deeply compassionate pastor with the Presbyterian Church in Canada at Oxford and Pugwash, N.S. (1949-52), Woodstock, N.B. (1952-57), Boston and Omaugh Milton, Ont. (1957-64), Sudbury, Ont. (1964-67), Ancaster and Alberton, Ont. (1967-85) and Atwood, Ont. (1985-90).

While in Ancaster he was the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's award for community service and out of a keen interest in social justice was one of the original movers of Ten Days for World Development. In his retirement he had been minister emeritus at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ancaster and Alberton Presbyterian Church. Donations may be made in his name to the Canadian Bible Society or the Christian Children's Fund. ■

Submit your questions, comments and thoughts at
presbyterianrecord.ca/calledtowonder
so we can discuss them in the coming months!

December is here.

BY ERIN WALTON

And along with it comes the end of the calendar year 2011. This year, it also brings my farewell wishes to you. I hope you've found my Called to Wonder creations over the last 10 years to be a blessing in some small way. What a blessing you've been to me. But December is also about beginnings. For example, birthdays mark the beginning of lives. Jesus' birthday is celebrated in December and so is mine! Other beginnings in December include the first day of winter and often the first day of Hanukkah.

The good news is that no matter whether something's starting or ending in your life, you're not alone. God is always there with you.

Check out **You Are Holy (Prince of Peace)** by Michael W. Smith on YouTube.

Follow along with the lyrics below:

You are holy

You are mighty

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Worthy of praise

And I will follow

I will listen

I will love you

All of my days

(Men)

I will sing to

And worship

The King who

Is worthy

I will love him

Adore Him

I will bow down

Before Him

I will sing to

And worship

The King who

Is worthy

I will love him

Adore Him

I will bow down

Before Him

(Women)

You are the Lord of Lords

You are the King of Kings

You are the mighty God

Lord of everything

You're Emmanuel

You're the Great I am

You're the Prince of Peace

Who is the Lamb

You're the Living God

You're my saving grace

You will reign forever

You are Ancient of Days

You are Alpha, Omega

Beginning and End

You're my Saviour, Messiah

Redeemer and Friend*

(Both) You're my Prince of Peace
And will live my life for you.



Beulah Garrison, 90, Saanich Peninsula, North Saanich, B.C.

*I've highlighted my favourite line. Knowing that God is Alpha and Omega (beginning and end) means we can face any new beginning or sad ending wrapped in His loving arms. Blessings to all of you.

After 10 years with Called to Wonder, Erin Walton has decided to pursue new projects. The Record is excited to see what she will do next, and wishes her the very best in all her future endeavours!

she made them wait each morning for their crust of bread, wait until she had finished her walk instead of giving it to them before she left. She told me, "Just about everything seems so much better if you have to wait for it."

Linda and I have had 41 years of blissfully happy incompatible marriage. We can and do disagree on just about anything. On this point however, we both agree. Waiting seems to be life's appetizer. We have some friends over for supper and make them wait in the living room with a small bowl of olives for an hour and we can feed them cardboard, or even one of my barbecued bear steaks, and they will devour it. We plan a simple, inexpensive camping vacation six months in advance and the wait makes it seem like an extravagant world cruise when we finally launch the travel trailer down the road. We buy a puppy from a breeder that has just had them installed in the oven and waiting out the gestation period makes that puppy seem like the birth of one of our own kids when it's finally whelped. I drop hints about the inexpensive straw cowboy hat that I have been admiring for months, and a hat-sized box shows up under the tree two weeks before Christmas. When I finally rip off the newspaper wrapping on Christmas morning, it's as good as a genuine beaver fur felt Stetson in my eyes; which brings me to the point.

The Advent of Jesus Christ and his Kingdom on earth is about waiting. Not the symbolic kind of waiting that involves Advent wreaths, candles and calendars, but real and deep, genuine anticipation. Not the psycho-drive theological school tried to sell me years ago, "the already but not yet of the kingdom" kind of waiting ... but real down to earth yearning. One of my favourite Advent texts is Acts 1:1-8. The Risen Christ is about to ascend to the heavens. His disciples, who have been waiting for three long years, following him so closely that the dust from his feet still sticks in their throats, plead with him: "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus' reply is: "It is not for you to know



Sarah Strasler, 11, St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.

**'Just about everything
seems so much
better if you have to
wait for it'**

the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority." (Acts 1:6-7) His point is, 'Guys, you are going to have to wait for it.' He then sends them to the ends of the earth to be his witnesses. And according to the rest of the Acts of the Apostles, they went, inspired by an appetite for the arrival of Christ's Kingdom that only waiting can muster. Better than a half-century later, the elder John would conclude the revelation given to him with the antiphonal prayer that reverberated with that same kind of pregnant anticipation of the Kingdom of Christ: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20)

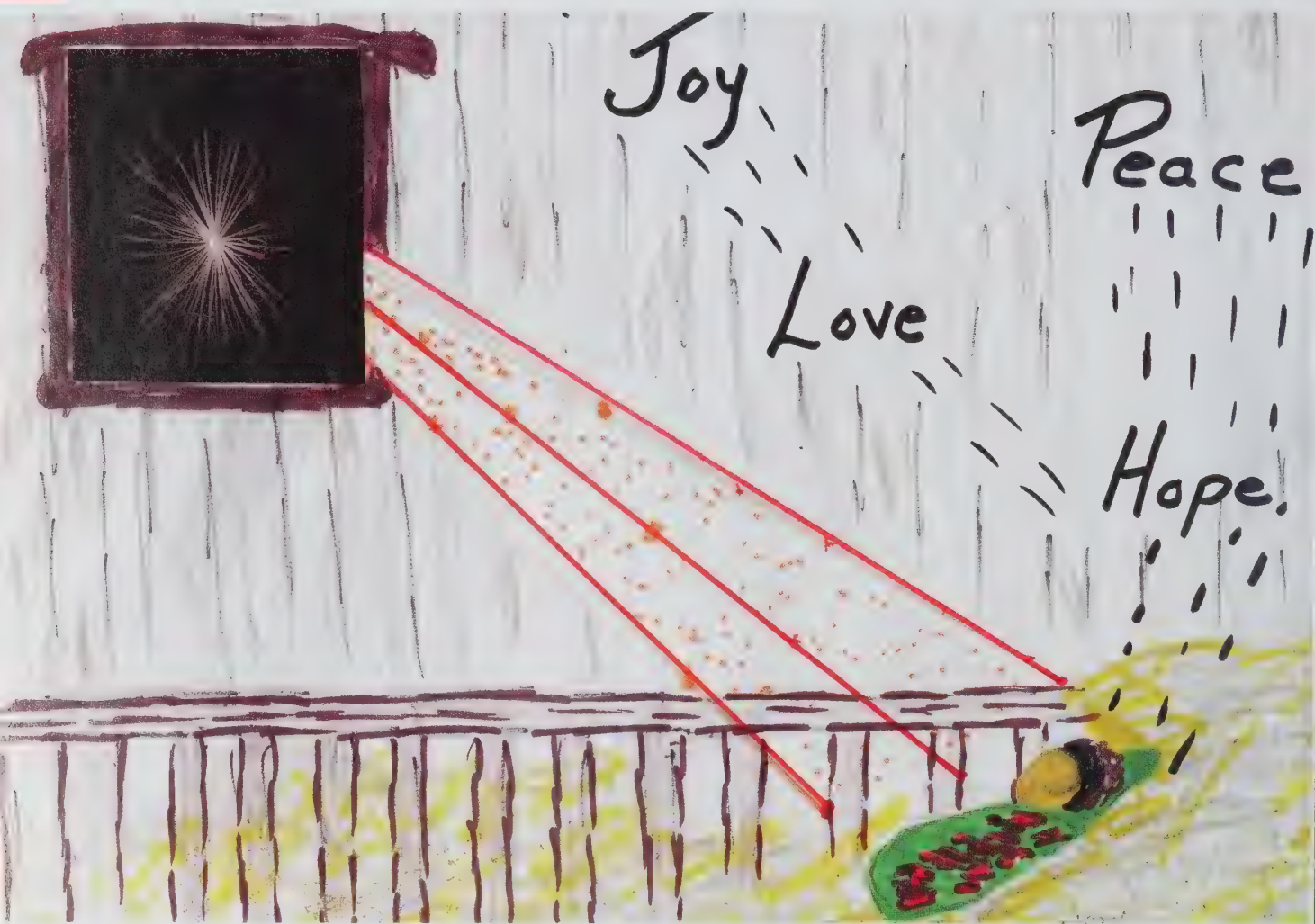
Can't you just feel it in those concluding phrases? Waiting in the faith sense is holy anticipation, which is cousin to what my friend and Kiwi soul mate Bruce Fraser talks about as holy desperation. Historically, both have given fuel to the Christian life to take great risks in serving Jesus. Historically, both have instilled a passionate appetite for serving Jesus at great cost. Biblically and historically, Kingdom-waiting, this Advent attitude, seems to be

fundamental to everyday Christian faith and faithfulness.

But I come from a world devoted to instant gratification. We can't even wait to brew a proper pot of tea let alone take the time to write a handwritten letter or save money to buy a car or read a whole book to get complete, insightful information on a subject. We thrive on steeped tea from a Tim Horton's drive-thru, one-sentence texts rapidly delivered by an iPhone, 10-year automobile mortgages and Googled tidbits of instant information. All of our devices and vices are built around having it now. Little wonder that I have trouble with the concept that waiting for the Kingdom of Jesus is a deeply enriching spiritual thing for my life and faith. And so it seems I tend to dismiss Jesus' words telling me I can't know the time of the Advent of his completed Kingdom as meaning "it's not important, so why think about it?" I totally miss the intent of his words, "my Kingdom is coming, you must wait for it." If I am bone honest I am not waiting with thirst and anticipation for his Kingdom on earth. I have sold out to a realized eschatology. And somehow I end up with a Christian faith that is neutered of hope because hope itself is grounded in waiting: "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." (Romans 8:24-25)

In the face of all this, it is dawning on me that for me the Advent season in the Christian year is about recovery. It's a tremendous counter-culture season devoted to helping me recover the desire to actively wait for the Kingdom of Christ and to reclaim a capacity for hope. It's about lifting my eyes from my culture of instant gratification and turning them heavenward to seek first the Kingdom. My Lord, what a season; what a Kingdom. I am waiting! ■

Rev. David Webber is minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry and the author of several books.



Lynne Hill, St. Andrew's, Bolsover, Ont.

Wait For It!

WAIT. FOR. IT. BY DAVID WEBBER

Linda looked out the window and smiled. "I guess I've kept 'em waiting long enough. Addy and I had better go for our walk."

It was 30-below-Celsius and the wind was blowing briskly off the lake. It took a few minutes for Linda to bundle up in her layers of winter duds. I looked outside and could see the two crows waiting patiently near the top of the spruce tree down by the lake. As the door opened and Linda and Addy stepped outside, the crows let go a muttered caw and swooped to the power pole nearest our house. Soon the whole tribe, Linda, Addy the Chesador and the two crows, set off for the morning

walk. The crows leapfrogged from power pole to power pole as Linda and Addy walked quickly down the road. The walk wasn't going to be over until Linda had her exercise and Addy did her business. Only then would the crows get their slice of bread.

This winter morning routine started a couple of years ago when two young crows decided to stay for the winter; one because it was small and obviously injured and the other seemingly just for company. Linda fed them through till spring keeping them alive. They have hung around ever since. They are always within beckoning range. They are Linda's constant companions whenever she is outside. I once asked Linda why

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